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DETROIT.

THE STROKE IN IRELAND

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Events of the Week.

THE expected shift of the wheel has come about in Ireland. The new Governor-General has issued a proclamation declaring the existence of "treasonable communications" of certain Irishmen with the enemy, in other words, of a "German plot." In the same breath Lord French appeals for Irish aid to crush this conspiracy, and announces a resort to voluntary enlistment, in the hope that the strength of the Irish regiments may be restored without "compulsion." Conscription, therefore, is temporarily abandoned, and will doubtless be half-forgotten in the new excitement of the German plot. The conspiracy would seem, by implication, to be the entire Sinn Fein movement, for Mr. de Valera, its most romantic figure, and Mr. Arthur Griffith, its chief literary champion, have been arrested, and with them most of the chief figures and organisers. But singularly enough they have not been definitely charged with anything, and have not been imprisoned, but merely "interned" in England. Mr. Shortt, the Chief Secretary, promises that "proof" of their guilt shall be forthcoming. But though Mr. Shortt is a lawyer, he does not seem to contemplate legal proof.

IRELAND has taken the arrests quietly, waiting the event, and the Sinn Fein Executive has decided that no resistance shall be offered. The Ministerial papers suggest that there is a division of policy between the Sinn Feiners and the Nationalists; but the Mansion House Conference has met—Mr. Dillon representing Nationalism, and Professor McNeill Sinn Fein—and passed a resolution condemning the arrests and declaring that they were intended to break up Ireland's resistance to conscription. Lord Montague, one of the most respected of Irish Unionist peers, also appeals strongly for the immediate production of legal evidence—i.e., for a trial. On the other hand, Belfast has hastened to denounce the German plot, and to dissociate itself from its earlier affection for the Kaiser. On the whole, there is an appeasement, and we hope that it will continue, and that all parties will contribute to it.

THE delay in the resumption of the German offensive is probably due to the Allied air supremacy which now

seems to be effectively achieved. The German Staff are encouraging their people to believe that the first act was no more than a preparation. This, indeed, it was in fact; but it was certainly far more in intention, and the only chance of securing that decisive success now which the earlier battles did not achieve is by surprise. The area of surprise has been constantly shrinking during the war, and it has now been narrowed down to a surprise by weight or momentum. All the preliminary stages of preparation for the only sort of offensive that can open with sufficient chance of success must be made in face of the enemy. The coming of aerial warfare and the necessity of attacking upon a wide front with all that this involves of patient road-making and of concentration of guns and ammunition have made it impossible, failing the possession of overwhelming and unchallengeable air supremacy, for anyone to strike on an unexpected front. All that can be done is to strike off the expected sector, but on some one part of it with unexpected strength. This again is dominated by aerial supremacy. The Germans have counted upon making their final and decisive concentration by night marches of the troops who must make or develop the initial success.

MOONLIGHT nights, which reveal with a terrible frankness all that is afoot on the roads, are inimical to such concentrations. Once the long columns of troops were identified it would not be long before the aeroplanes were at work at their destructive rôle. The new blow may be deferred until the moon is less revealing and the prying eyes of hostile aeroplanes less of a menace. But the recent raids upon the Rhine towns give a hint of possibilities that may turn the aerial service into something more nearly approaching a decisive factor than has been hitherto appreciated. The raid on London, despite the unhappy casualties, is much more than offset by the raid in broad daylight on Cologne, and the cumulative effect of the Allied air raids upon Germany is striking and suggestive. While the German armies have succeeded in invading part of France, the Allied navies have invaded every enemy household and factory, and at a certain point aerial supremacy would accentuate this porosity of the field fronts. War has changed fundamentally, and before the advent of mastery of the air it would have been possible for Germany to win all the battles without winning the war. But now that something approaching real air mastery is with us the enemy may lose at Essen, Hanover, and a host of remote towns all that he gains on the battlefronts.

A NEW sort of investment becomes possible; but it is a more terrible one. The Navy and Army attempt to invest from without. The Royal Air Force stakes on an investment from within. We have before pointed out the more obvious results of a vigorous air offensive—the immobilization of airmen within Germany, and the comparative immunity in this country. But there is more than this which the R.A.F. is beginning to achieve. It is tending to blind the German armies. In proportion as airmen can be immobilized in the heart of Germany, the reconnaissance of the German armies at the front

will fail. And it is but now becoming clear how great is the number of considerable towns in Germany. They are just considerable enough to offer the maximum result in moral effect to a bold air-raid. London is too vast, and the mere pin pricks of material damage are seen by so small a proportion as to have no effect on the whole. The number of towns already open to aerial attack by the Allies where what is done in one street is both heard and seen by everyone is too large not to offer us an appreciable advantage. The Germans dare not leave these towns defenceless; but the front must pay for their defence.

But it is not only the reconnaissance of the enemy that suffers. The striking force must also be weakened. The anti-aircraft defence is called upon to suffer an increasing strain. The enemy has not too much metal or munitions; but he must supply more guns and more fuel for all the towns open to attack. The guns so far necessary may not be a critical number. But the combatants are building machines whose mere appearance makes the heart grow cold. Their size is such that men walking below their lower plane look like mere pygmies, and the pillars which support the upper planes give the impression of Corinthian columns. The radius of action and power of inflicting damage which such machines possess completely change the species of influence these airships may have upon warfare. With a sufficient number of such aeroplanes it would be possible to inhibit the manufacture of munitions in a degree adequate to sustain the battlefronts. Munition centres could be destroyed more quickly than they could be built. The endeavor to protect such centres would result in starving the front of guns and munitions as well as aeroplanes. The centre of gravity of the war would forsake the army fronts for the air.

AND since it is *moral* which decides the war, how could a nation with aims whose predatory nature is now obvious continue the struggle in face of such a nightmare? We read of the panic at Cologne after the daylight air-raid. Multiply this by a thousand, not for a city a thousandfold larger (which, as we have suggested, is almost invulnerable in this respect), but for a hundred considerable towns so treated, and we begin to see even the most docile and disciplined nation recoiling from a horror that is greater than any other in human thought. However much our objectives are maintained as purely military, the enemy with a looser notion of what is permissible will always suffer the anticipation of like treatment, and the Allies must gain from the very theory of necessity which the Germans introduced. Such speculations might have seemed mere idle dreams when we first discussed them long ago. But now we appear to be within sight of at least a measure of realization. Those who said the war would be decided in the air were not entirely astray, and we are only at the beginning of the application of a new force that may destroy the menace under which many nations have shuddered.

At the present it is hardly disputable that we have succeeded in investing the enemy in a completely new sense. In effect, the Allied front has been carried eastwards beyond the line where the German infantry and guns stand. The "Frankfurter" has recently been attempting to show how the losses of the attacker are less than those of the defender. Even theoretically this is impossible when the defender has innumerable eyes behind the attacker's line. And at a certain point the whole German plan could be made a failure. Kemmel Hill was held some six or seven hours, and a fracture in the line prevented by the Allied aeroplanes; and there were many Kemmels in the first great battle of the first act. Troops hastening forward in column were caught time and again by the low-flying machines. To say they were delayed is to state a euphemism. Many were destroyed, and the aeroplanes hastened backward and forward, filling their guns and emptying them without cessation. The whole question now is, have we been foreseeing enough to change the plan of the attack

vitality? The enemy has budgetted for a certain expense. Have we a sufficient air force to exaggerate that expense to the point of inanition before the armies have achieved a decisive effect? That is the doubtful point which the next week or two will resolve. We sincerely trust we have the force, and recent events have given us some hope.

A BRILLIANT attack by Australian troops on Saturday night gave us possession of Ville-sur-Ancres, with 360 prisoners and 20 machine-guns, and the French have considerably eased the position west of Kemmel. It is difficult to appreciate without large-scale maps the meaning of these and other recent Allied successes. They had limited objectives of tactical importance, and the objectives were gained. For nearly a month now the German attacks have died down, and the time has been employed by the Allies in improving their positions. Almost every change that has taken place has been to our advantage, and there is a significant change in the Neutral Press as to the chances of the Germans securing a victory. On the other hand, the essential issue now is clearer than ever. Unless the Germans win *right out* now, they have lost—is the witness of some of the Scandinavian critics who were wont to regard the Central Powers as bound to win. It cannot be long before the enemy begins once more. The front of attack will probably be even larger than before. The immediate objective may be the cutting off of the Vimy-Arras salient. But even this is but a step to the main end, which is the destruction of the Allied armies as a fighting force.

THE debate on the Austrian Peace Overtures of 1917, which Mr. Runciman opened on Thursday week in an interrogative speech, has had two salutary results. Mr. Balfour has removed the impression which Lord Robert Cecil had conveyed in his reckless American interview, that any overtures from the enemy will be rejected, even before the terms are known. He assured the House that the door is not closed even to informal approaches, provided that the intermediaries come with trustworthy credentials. Secondly, he has very sharply separated our Government from any French territorial ambitions which go beyond the frontier of 1870. In doing so, he affected to minimize the reality of these ambitions, and doubted whether for "any length of time" it was ever "a very fixed or solid part" of the policy of any French Government. The transactions on the subject began, as the Russian documents show, as early as March, 1916, between Petrograd and Paris, and the agreement between them (which was confidentially communicated to London) was reached by M. Doumergue (the special emissary of M. Poincaré), who submitted the French claims to the Rhine to "the Most High" (the Tsar) in February, 1917. Russia accepted the French claims formally on February 14th, 1917. Thus for a year M. Poincaré admittedly worked for these ends. It was only six weeks later that he repeated his claims to Prince Sixtus.

MR. BALFOUR's history of these transactions was, as usual, vague and sketchy. He ignored the evidence that the Prime Minister thought the Austrian overtures promising and assented only reluctantly to their rejection. His excuse for the failure to inform himself or Mr. Wilson or the Russian and Belgian Governments of the negotiations, was that the Emperor's letter was communicated subject to the condition that it should be shown only to M. Poincaré and M. Ribot, King George and Mr. Lloyd George. That we take to be the fact—a fact which makes its subsequent publication the less defensible. None the less, the substance of the offer was disclosed to Baron Sonnino and discussed with him. It was also disclosed somewhat later to Messrs. Painlevé and Thomas. If Baron Sonnino could be consulted, why not Mr. Wilson and M. Kerensky? If M. Thomas, why not Mr. Balfour? Again, Mr. Balfour, in effect, throws the whole onus for the rejection of these overtures on Italy. The evidence is that M. Poincaré from the first adhered to the view that no negotiation was possible before a final victory, and victory for him meant in concrete terms the left bank of the Rhine. Finally, Mr.

Balfour rests his belief that the Emperor was "insincere" on the theory that his object was not to get peace, but to divide the Allies. The proof of this is that, though he offered suitable terms to Belgium, generous terms to France, and something appreciable to Serbia, he said nothing about Italy.

SURELY this preliminary omission to mention Italy was not unnatural. Italy, up to 1914 the formal ally of Austria, after refusing terms for her neutrality, was the last of the Allies to whom Austria could be expected spontaneously to offer much. Is the Emperor "insincere" in his desire for peace because he held back South Tyrol, or Dalmatia, or Albania, or the Adriatic ports? Does it follow that no further process of negotiation could have got for Italy such concessions as are her due? We do not believe it, and a mass of evidence goes to show that Austria was not only sincerely, but even desperately, anxious for peace. Mr. Balfour said nothing to alter our belief that a golden opportunity for peace was missed in 1917. On the contrary, his stress on the Italian aspect of the question only served to remind the critical reader that it is the fast ageing territorial claims of the Secret Treaties which were on our side the obstacle to peace, as surely as to-day it is the enemy's ambitions in the East which delay it. The hopeful point of his speech concerns the future. His reference to informal overtures for peace might almost be read as an invitation.

Mr. WILSON's brief speech at a Red Cross demonstration at New York on Saturday supplies an American commentary to these discussions. He strikes his familiar note about justice to Russia, and thus contributes an idealistic and disinterested reason for rejecting that peace which others refuse on more realistic grounds. All these overtures for peace Mr. Wilson pronounces to be "insincere," because they disclose invariably a demand for "a free hand," for conquest and exploitation in the East. That was certainly not apparent in the 1917 offer, but doubtless Mr. Wilson is referring to later openings. We are strongly with him in recognizing that any peace which handed over the East to German domination would mean the bisection of civilization, and the negation of any League of Nations. To such a dishonorable bargain of East against West we would prefer, if we had to choose, even a *status quo ante bellum* peace. But some facts must be faced. If the war goes on for years, may not Germany consolidate her power in the East past all shaking? Again, can any military event alter the fact that her solidier material development must always give her at least an economic ascendancy in Russia and the Near East? Lastly, are we sure that if he conceded to her the economic opportunities which she values in the East, she would insist on political control and refuse an international resettlement of the Russian Borderland?

THE anomaly of Russia's international position can hardly continue much longer. We have no official dealings with her, and no trade, while postal communications hardly exist. Germany at the same time trades with her, recognizes her government, and filches her territory. The question of Japanese intervention is not yet finally settled. America dreams of bringing the Bolsheviks again into the war on our side, while the French military press advocates the Allied occupation of her northern ports. In all this welter of interested speculation, we recognize a belated tendency to recognize (1) that the Bolsheviks seem firmly seated; (2) that no Allied force, Japanese or other, can be sent in without their consent and goodwill; and (3) that the propertied parties and classes are much more likely to accept German leadership than the revolutionary parties. The lesson of Finland and the Ukraine has at last been partially learned. We doubt, however, the policy or the possibility of getting Russia again into the war. Assuming that the Bolsheviks can create a big and spirited "Red" army, what can it do without railways, factories, or food behind it? The collapse of Russia was primarily economic. Years of re-organization will be

needed before Russia can fight again, and if she fights prematurely she will be mercilessly overrun. The wiser course is to recognize Russia as a friendly neutral, and to give her such expert and economic aid as we can. If we got no military help from her in return, at least we should thus prevent her from falling under German penetration.

M. CLEMENCEAU has retaliated upon the "Manchester Guardian," the only English newspaper which published the facts about the Austrian overtures of 1917, by expelling its correspondent, Mr. Dell, from France. Mr. Dell has a long and distinguished journalistic record, and this blow dealt to him and the paper he represents can hardly add to M. Clemenceau's popularity in England. The decision is the more remarkable since Mr. Dell's facts had for the most part appeared freely in the French Socialist Press, and to judge from Mr. Balfour's speech in the debate upon them, they admit of no challenge. M. Clemenceau himself removed the veil of secrecy from these transactions, when he published the Emperor's first letter. His view apparently is that the world ought to know only so much of this episode as he chooses to reveal. Mr. Dell and certain of the French Socialist deputies thought otherwise. Their revelations seemed to the Liberal Front Bench in England serious enough for the initiation of a formal debate, and Mr. Balfour made his reply without either correcting the facts or censuring their publication. Mr. Dell, then, has suffered for supplying material which the whole House of Commons thought fit to debate. Thus the blow is dealt not to Mr. Dell alone, nor merely to the great newspaper which he serves, but to British public opinion. M. Clemenceau's action simply keeps it in the dark.

THE Committee on Bank Amalgamations, mainly composed of bankers, has issued a report of a very frank and revealing character. After citing general evidence of the concentration of the industry in fewer businesses (private banks fell from 37 to 6 since 1891, and joint-stock banks from 106 to 34), it recognizes that recent amalgamations are in several respects open to objections in the public interest. The main objections are three. First, "The proportion of capital to deposits is now so small that any further shrinkage of bank capital is clearly undesirable, in the interests of depositors," and recent amalgamations have been attended by a notable decline both in the proportion and the actual amount of capital. Secondly, amalgamation of large joint-stock banks means a net reduction of competition which is considered injurious by corporations and other great investing bodies. Thirdly, the Committee recognizes some danger of a banking combine or Money Trust. Its language on this matter deserves citation as an example of litotes. "While we believe that there is at present no idea of a Money Trust, it appears to us not altogether impossible that circumstances might produce something approaching to it at a comparatively early date."

In other words, the peril of a banking combine is not remote but near. What does the Committee propose to do about it? It proposes that the Government shall be required to sanction not only any new proposal for amalgamation but any arrangement, such as an interlocking directorate, which would unify the interests of two banks. How futile a line of policy this is for interfering with what the Committee itself recognizes as a "natural development of trade," the experience of the United States has proved. There is every reason to approve the large economies and the strengthened business structure which amalgamation can achieve. What is required is that the credit-using public and not the bank shareholders shall reap the gain of amalgamation. Why do the bankers favor a State Control? Probably because they fear more that which they name in this document as the only alternative. "Any approach to a banking combine or Money Trust would undoubtedly cause great apprehension to all classes of the community, and give rise to a demand for nationalizing the banking trade." Very likely.

Politics and Affairs.

THE TWO POLICIES.

"While it is clear that the complete attainment of this ideal [the League of Nations] must involve the eventual inclusion in it of States and peoples now hostile, it is equally clear that their inclusion is inconceivable until they have been compelled, by the force of Allied arms, the weight of Allied economic pressure, and the inherent moral strength of the Allied cause to renounce their insensate dreams of world-domination, to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and to qualify for readmission to the comity of civilized peoples."—The "Times."

THE Austrian negotiation is still an obscure event. But two results of it are beginning to appear. It has been a disaster to Austria. But it may quite possibly prove to have been a blessing to the Allies. As the result of it, their policy already shows a fairly marked re-entry to its earlier and wiser mind. It has reverted, in the first place, to the open door. Mr. Balfour's speech of last week, taken with Mr. Asquith's significant annotation, is conclusive on that point. So is Lord Curzon's. So is Lord Robert Cecil's second thought, which now stands in marked contrast with his first. The Cecilian ban is removed. It now appears that we are not to turn down any German peace proposal in advance. On the contrary, said Mr. Balfour, if any representative of any belligerent seriously desired to make a proposal, we were willing to listen to it. We should be ready to consider peace at any time which was the right one, said Lord Curzon. Any offer coming from a reasonable and trustworthy source, added Lord Robert Cecil, deserved examination. The British Government, commented Mr. Asquith, had closed no door to overtures leading towards an honorable peace. So far as a general definition of attitude is concerned, that is as far as the Government can be expected to go.

But Mr. Balfour added one or two suggestions of special tendency. He quite definitely repudiated M. Poincaré's or M. Doumergue's claim of the "line of 1814," i.e., of the Rhine border, as the boundary between France and Germany. Mr. Asquith took this as a repudiation of what has been called the "sliding scale peace." If there was no contraction of Allied aims there must also, he insisted, be no "expansion" of them. That, again, is a way of saying that our goal is not a territorial peace, but a political and moral one. Lord Robert Cecil, who is a master of tactlessness, re-established a certain balance between the moral and the territorial idea, but if he only meant that the new European order will not exactly arise from the *status quo ante bellum*, and that regard must be had to the claims of nationality, we shall not quarrel with him. The point is that the search for such an order should lie in the centre of our effort at reconstruction, and should not be conceived as a distant and incidental consequence of it. If we may take the sentence in the "Times" which we prefix to this article as fixing the re-orientation of Ministerial policy, we may begin to think of the end of the war, and even to shape the resettlement of Europe.

For if the League of Nations was a remedy for war in 1914, still more is it a cure for war in 1918. Indeed, the special virtue of this particular medicine is that we can apply it at any hour, and that the complications of the disease do not spoil its efficacy. Only, as even the "Times" begins to see, we must not adulterate it. For example, we can beat Germany as thoroughly as even M. Clemenceau likes, and still we can establish a

League of Nations. We can occupy much of her territory and that of her allies. But we can still revert to the League of Nations as the instrument of the peace. The prolongation of the war does, in our view, greatly add to the difficulties of the League, but does not nullify it. Even the hatreds of the war, profound as they are, may be wiped out in the settlement, if it be the right one. But there is one thing which must absolutely kill the hopes of peace for generations, destroy the effort of our armies, and stamp the death of millions as the seal of a useless sacrifice. That is to treat the war as virtually unending, and the conclusion of peace as only a stage in a process of extermination, or of the definite political subordination of one vast group of nations to another.

Now Germany has all but made this colossal mistake. Do not let us therefore follow her. We take it that the Ministerial speeches we have quoted represent, on the whole, a half-conscious effort at avoidance, and at the restoration of unity in the civilized order. For Europe is on the point of such a fissure as was voluntarily made in the Roman Empire when the burden of government became too heavy for one man, or for one administrative centre. Europe is again threatened by an Empire of the West and an Empire of the East. England and America would be at the head of the first; Germany of the second. The one Empire would in the main be a Maritime Power, the other a Land Power. The trench-line dividing these two hegemonies would be an economic, no less than a material, structure. They would struggle with each other for the possession of India; they would always be preparing for future wars; they would always have their eyes on Central Asia and the Far East. The Maritime Empire would be the richer, the more stable, and also the more liberal, the more sympathetically composed, and the more united in thought and sentiment. The Land Power would be the stronger militarily. But in their inevitable and prolonged conflict these forces must destroy what we call civilization, and make religion, reason, and humanity pray for a new planet to grow up in. A world so tortured would probably regain its unity at the final price of Germany's extinction. But the attempt even to calculate the intervening processes plunges us into a madman's dream. You cannot turn the modern society of States into a diatom. But unless statesmanship deliberately conceives its task as the restoration of world-unity, our children may find themselves wrestling with some such tragic absurdity as we have foreshadowed.

It is for this reason, we imagine, that President Wilson has declined to "let go" of Eastern Europe, and says, in his speech to the American Red Cross, that he intends to "stand by Russia," as he has stood by France. In other words, he proposes to think of the peace as he has always thought of it—namely, as a means of restoring "unity of life." Is that Utopian politics? It is ideal politics, which is a different thing. It would be Utopianism, and cross-grained Utopianism at that, if the President meant not only to uproot the whole plant of German influence, legitimate and illegitimate, in Eastern Europe, but to stop all German growth westwards and seawards. He means, we take it, two different things. He intends to give democracy the chance to grow. This is his formula, and he will apply it unshrinkingly to Russia. And his way of realizing it is to relieve the exclusive and tyrannous German pressure on Eastern Europe. The American policy, therefore, reverses the Protectionist device of "hemming in." It gives Germany freedom on the sole condition that she concedes it. Mr. Wilson is bound to trade off the

whole apparatus of an exclusive settlement—the territorial treaties, our capture of German colonies, the blockade, the economic boycott, the embargo on raw materials—against Germany's war-gains and military occupations, her forced treaty with Roumania, and her usurpation in the Ukraine. "Standing by Russia" is, in that interpretation, "standing by" a world-settlement. If we take that view of the peace, the unity of the Allies is a real unity, and they move together towards the only compassable end of the war. Germany will undoubtedly be required to put her Eastern "treaties" into the common stock, to treat them as material for the Areopagus. But she may also be encouraged to exchange them, so to speak, for bonds redeemable on the League of Nations, on whose board her representatives will sit. She is formally advised that, on conditions, she may be "re-admitted," as the "Times" says, into "comity." The general march of the civilized order, with its various grades of progress and attainment, is to be resumed; and she is to be in it.

Here, then, are the two policies; the Allies halt between them, but they must choose the second. Difficult as it is to think of military Germany as a civilizable force, we shall eventually have to help her to become one. To that end she must be given a chance to save herself. It is impossible to undo all that has happened in Eastern Europe. Either the Jews or the Germans will come in to supply the cement to hold together the promising but fluid, unpractical, and terribly backward Russian mass. And on the other hand, the Allies have yet to give commercial, maritime Germany an answer to the militarists, who pretend that, in the face of an exclusive Entente, Germany's future lies with a solidly Protectionist Mid-European Bund, with an ambitious, intriguing Eastern extension at our expense and the world's. Nor is it enough to have a policy which merely waits on the chance of a pause in the death-grapple of the Armies, or anticipates an end to it that all the world can appraise at a glance. Neither side can now look to an Austerlitz or a Waterloo; it is even doubtful whether the war will ever yield a second Battle of the Marne or of Tannenberg. The real combatants are conflicting ideas about the world's future, and they are at issue not on the battle-fields, but in the Cabinets. If our politicians were democrats or idealists, or even large-minded men, with a powerful public opinion behind them, they would long ago have set up the standard of the League and begun to group the nations under it. But events are driving Nationalist France and Italy and Imperialist Britain along the road which America chose as by instinct, and when that alliance of ideas is complete the German defence will fall before it.

THE ITALO-SLAV AGREEMENT.

In the early weeks of April Italians and South Slavs met in a Congress in Rome under the benevolent neutrality of the Italian Government to settle the terms of a *rapprochement*. A provisional *rapprochement* was reached. The terms are vague, the competence of the contracting parties ill-defined; but the tendency of the agreement is unexceptionable. Italians and Jugo-Slavs each declare their mutual recognition that the unity and independence of the others is one of their vital interests. They declare, further, that "the liberation of the Adriatic Sea and its defence against every present and future enemy is a vital interest of the two peoples," and pledge themselves to an amicable solution of all territorial disputes on the basis of self-determination (with a saving but reciprocal clause as to vital interests). Finally, they guarantee full cultural autonomy to national minorities.

That is, undoubtedly, a good agreement. The cynic will say it needed Caporetto to bring the Italians, even unofficially, to such a reasonable frame of mind; but the same cynic will, if he is honest, admit that no belligerent has yet been revealed in the course of this war who had any moral scruples about taking all he could get so long as he thought he was winning. The Italians have behaved no worse politically than anyone else; also, they had serious irredentist grievances and aims; their offence, if any, has been their honesty in making a phylactery of the impolite *sacro egoismo*. That a good agreement should have been to a large extent forced upon them by circumstances is only one more proof that the very best thing for the world at large would be that every single belligerent should fail to win the kind of war its Jingoists wanted it to win. But the Italo-South-Slav agreement is not yet ratified or recognized by any responsible government. So far, it is only a political second-string. Secret treaties are still the first. If, therefore, the agreement is elevated to the status of a solemn treaty, a wholly desirable step is taken towards the abolition of those shady diplomatic covenants which hang like millstones about the neck of every honest democrat. But the secret treaties and the new agreement cannot co-exist. Each destroys the other. Worse than their mutual destructiveness would be the opportunity they would give to the German propagandist. He would soon be at his work of persuading the Slavs of the Dual Monarchy that the agreement was only a temporary veil for the imperialistic aggressions of Italy. The mistrust would only be deepened.

At this point the question arises, what will be the real significance of the agreement if it does become an act of state? In the event of a "knock-out blow" for the Entente the advantage of such an understanding is evident; but the immediate cause of its conclusion was largely the realization that the "knock-out blow" is impossible, and indeed it is conceived by its principal promoters as an alternative weapon to full military victory. Is it likely to prove a valuable one? To answer this question we need to know to what extent the Slavs of Austria are willing and able to take action against the Habsburg State. If such an agreement is to be the signal for revolution, and if this reason is advanced by its supporters for the Entente Powers giving it formal recognition, we need to know approximately what we are to expect. In this matter some of the organizers of the Rome Congress, in which representatives of all the nationalities of the Dual Monarchy took part, appear to have been guilty of camouflage. Representatives of the Poles signed a declaration that "they recognized in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the instrument of German domination and the fundamental obstacle to the realization of their aspirations and rights." Now, it is in the highest degree improbable that, even after the Cholm imbroglio, more than a small proportion of Poles is prepared to make such a declaration the basis of their policy. At the present moment the majority of the Polish members of the Austrian Reichsrat is engaged in negotiating (as usual) with the government and the German deputies with a view to giving its support, for a consideration, to certain measures directed against the South Slavs and the Czechs which the Austrian Government has in contemplation. The Poles, as a body, are far too conscious of the privileged position which they enjoy in the Dual Monarchy to lend themselves to the reorganization of the world. They are "real" politicians. If nationalities have been oppressed in Austria-Hungary, they have been the willing instruments of that oppression. They will change their present policy only when they see an immediate advantage to be derived from the change—that is, when a complete military defeat has been inflicted upon the Central Powers.

Nor is it by any means clear to what extent the South Slavs would act, if they could, or even would desire to act. The South Slavs of Austria itself are in extreme opposition; but, on the other hand, the Serbo-Croats of Hungary are still perfectly willing to support the Magyar domination in its most detestable form so long as their own autonomy is guaranteed, and to do all that is constitutionally in their power to prevent the

Slovaks from forming part of a Czech State or the Roumans from having the most rudimentary justice done to their national claims. Whether they are still, as they certainly used to be, fervidly loyal to the dynasty, we cannot say, but it is reasonable on the evidence to assume that they too appreciate the advantages of their present position too well to make common cause with the South Slavs in an active anti-dynastic policy. Even in the case of the Czechs, the situation, quite apart from the practicability of any more active revolution than that which takes the form of a discreet sabotage, is not free from obscurity. Without the help of a strong Russia, their "state-right" policy, involving as it does the inclusion within a sovereign Czech State a minority of Germans who for the most part march with Saxons of the German Empire, is a manifest impossibility. It would be impossible, even were the Western Powers to achieve a complete military victory; it would be equally impossible to attain by revolution, for even if the revolution were immediately successful, the German Bohemians would be included in the Empire by a stroke of the pen. In short, the Czechs are a formidable Parliamentary opposition; but, once the Reichsrat is taken away from them, they are practically powerless. Under the Stürgkh régime of repression, not a Czech voice was heard even at the moment when the Dual Monarchy was cowering behind the Carpathians in imminent peril of its life. What repression has done already, it may do again.

The truth seems to be that since the Russian Revolution there have been but two powers in Austria-Hungary which have dared to act. One is the Crown, the other the proletariat. Adler shot Stürgkh, the Emperor amnestied the Czechs. We may take it that, whether this was M. Clemenceau's deliberate intention or not, his revelation of the Emperor's letter has reduced the Emperor to the position of a nonentity in high policy. The Socialists alone remain. The Czechs and South Slavs can make Parliamentary government impossible, and it is their duty to do so if, as seems likely, Parliamentary government is to mean that they are to consent to their own political extinction. But there is, unfortunately, no reason to suppose that the Austrian Government will find the thought of administration by Ukase (*oktroi*) so very much more intolerable than it has been in the good old days. Under pressure from the German Empire it will, moreover, reconcile itself to a great deal. But if the old absolutist régime is resumed, neither the Czechs nor the South Slavs will be able to effect anything against it without the active assistance of the Socialists; and the Socialists happen to detest the Chauvinism of the Czechs about as much as they do that of the Germans. Bohemian State-right would have a short shrift if the Socialists were to come into power.

Therefore it is on a calm calculation exceedingly improbable that the Italo-South Slav agreement, if confirmed by the Entente Governments, will be the signal to the internal enemies of Austria, who have, as a matter of fact, long since been doing all they could. The signal will be given, if by anything, by starvation, and, just as the German Army would be ruthless in helping to put down a rising, the German authorities would be circumspect enough to give a little food themselves and to persuade Hungary to give a little more in order to prevent the smouldering discontent from bursting into flame. Germany has a strong Ally in dealing with the Slavs of Austria in the Magyars, and the signs are clear that Germany intends to force Austria to buy Hungarian food and to pay for it by allowing Hungary to absorb the bulk of the South Slavs by the incorporation of Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It may be that in the long run this policy of pure tyranny will come to grief, but the run may be very long. Still, if we are to admit that the time is now past when a *rapprochement* with the Habsburg Empire was possible, it is obviously better that the Entente should face the new situation and compose its own internal schisms. The Italo-South Slav agreement will not work wonders; it comes too late for that. But it is an honest agreement, of which no one, whatever the issue, need be ashamed. It is of no use

for us to be merely sentimental with the Habsburg now that he cannot help us if he would, and probably (being a very human soul) would not if he could. What was possible a year ago is now become a dream; that the Entente made it a dream is no reason why we should refuse to wake. Let the Italo-South Slav agreement be recognized without delay. It can do harm, and it will do moral good, if it can do no other.

THE GREAT TEST IN INDIA.

THE return of Mr. Montagu from India brings us near to an hour which will test the liberalism of our Empire. He went out with the definite purpose of studying the steps which may be taken at once towards the concession of responsible government. His appointment followed promptly on a declaration in which he committed himself to a large measure of autonomy, and Indians had every right to draw the conclusion that his views are shared by the Prime Minister. Hopes have been aroused, and the time has come to fulfil them. A Coalition, whether it deals with Ireland or with India, is apt to be the most dangerous of all forms of government in a composite Empire. A Tory Government may yield nothing, but it excites no delusive expectations. A Liberal Government may arouse hopes, and in some measure fulfil them. A Coalition is apt to promise, while its acts render fulfilment impossible. We dare not risk in India the failures and provocations which two successive Coalitions have accumulated in Ireland. The parallel is ominous, but it would be folly to refuse to face risks which lie in the nature of these combinations. No sooner have the more progressive elements of the partnership made a move towards conceding a claim of nationality than the reaction within it rallies and mans its trenches. When the hour strikes to fulfil the hopes which have been aroused, there is either a compromise which ruins the reality of reform, a postponement which calls our good faith in question, or else an attempt to combine repression with concession. *Absit omen.* Let us hope that Mr. Montagu will be more fortunate than Mr. Duke, but it will be well to adjust our calculations to the probability that the bureaucracy and the well-organized British commercial interests in India will find backing in the War Cabinet for their opposition to any large or significant concessions. The recent refusal to allow a deputation of influential Indian nationalists to come to England to state their case is a reminder that the forces of resistance are alert and strongly-posted at the centre of power.

There is one circumstance in the Indian problem which may incline even the most realist and the least generous of the older school to large concessions. The military aspect of our Eastern problems has changed fundamentally since Mr. Montagu's appointment was first made. Russia was then intact. The German line lay no further East than Poland, and in Asiatic Turkey the Russian Army was holding an advanced line which included the Armenian provinces. To-day the crumbling of the Russian State has opened to the Turco-Germans a door of penetration which may carry them dangerously near to the outposts of India. The Germans are advancing from the Crimea to the Don as fast as they can comfortably march, while the Turks in the Caucasus have got as far as Baku and the Caspian shore. These advances are doubtless made with small forces, and may be precarious (it is said already that the Turks, after taking Baku, have lost it again), and we shall err gravely if we forget the immense distances and the poor communications of outer Russia. None the less the effect of the German advance is evident in Persia. There we are paying for our disastrous association with the Russian autocracy. To purchase its worthless support in the European balance of power our Foreign Office flung away the confidence which the Nationalist-Democratic movement in Persia at first reposed in us, tolerated the permanent Russian occupation of Northern Persia, and obliged M. Sazonoff by ruining Mr. Shuster's good work. We are afraid it was inevitable, when the world-war

came, that the Persian Nationalists, who regarded Tsardom as their worst enemy, and looked on us as its partners, should turn to our enemies for support. Exactly what had happened recently in Teheran we do not know, but the Persian Government, by denouncing the Anglo-Russian Convention, which partitioned the country into spheres of political and economic interest (readjusted in one of the Secret Treaties) has clearly declared that it means to throw off our tutelage. The benevolent interest of Berlin in Afghanistan, of which the latest phase is the suggestion that the Amir should be provided with a port in Baluchistan, is another symptom of the trend of German policy.

One need take no alarmist view of these tendencies. It is uncertain whether Germany really aims at playing a great political rôle permanently in the Middle East, or merely seeks, at small cost to herself, to stir up troubles and dangers for us. It is possible, and even probable, that in return for "economic peace" she would drop the political side of these Eastern ambitions with little regret. As her conduct towards Morocco showed, she would feel no scruple at abandoning protégés on whose hopes and resentments she is playing to-day. None the less, if the war drags on, she may have leisure to force her spear-head far into the Middle East, and even to consolidate her power in some regions dangerously near to India. There is little but the distance to make it difficult for her pioneers or Allies to reach the Turco-Tartar populations of the Khanates.

This Turco-German penetration of the northern roads which lead to the back-doors of India can have no dangers for us, unless all sense of statesmanship deserts us. The future depends on our realization of the fact that the true defence of India in the generations to come must be neither distance nor the sea, neither deserts nor the Himalayas, but the contentment of the Indian peoples with their lot. This vast population would laugh at the bare suggestion of invasion, if it were mobilized to defend a State which it regarded as its own. The key to the military problem is policy. If ever we had ventured to make India a self-supporting, defensive unit, it would have ceased to be a lure for conquerors. That means, however, the abandonment of the jealous tradition which feared to train native officers, feared to entrust native regiments with artillery, and omitted to build up in India the local industries on which a modern army must depend. These fears were prudent only so long as we conceived of ourselves as conquerors governing India by the sword. They will vanish when once we have faced the necessity of conceding Indian self-government. India can be held against all comers if Indians feel that they are defending not merely the soil of their native land, but a government based on their own consent. If, on the other hand, we hesitate to give, or give grudgingly, if we repeat in India the follies of our recent handling of Ireland, it follows that we shall continue to neglect its defensive resources, adhere to the tradition of confiding its defence to a white garrison, and thereby risk, not perhaps its loss, but at least intrigues and alarms which may, and must, make our continued rule in India burdensome to ourselves and irksome to its people. To say that the danger to India is at some distant date a successful foreign invasion is to take a very narrow view. The odds are that the actual invasion will never be risked, or will fail if the attempt is made. The danger rather is that a discontented India, whose millions we dare not arm for the defence of their motherland, is a standing invitation to intriguing politicians and ambitious soldiers. Their plots, their tentatives, and, above all, their armaments and our counter-armaments are danger enough without an actual invasion. If we will not arm India to defend herself, we must permanently conscribe our own manhood to do it. If we do arm her, it follows that we must first see to it that she is contented with her lot.

Contentment is not a condition of mind into which a country can be hypnotized by phrases. The Indian demand for Home Rule is only a way of summing up the will of a people to deal itself with a whole complex of problems which touch its interests and its self-respect. This land, which still dazzles the ambitious soldier, is so

poor that the daily income of its inhabitants was reckoned, at the opening of this century, at something less than a penny a head. Sir Charles Elliott, a very high authority, said that "half the agricultural population never knows from year's end to year's end what it is to have their hunger satisfied." Even to-day only one-fifth of the children of school-age go to school, though native Baroda has contrived to establish universal education. The social grievance of the color-line, the grudging admission of Indians to responsible posts, the closing to them until Mr. Montagu's recent decision of commissioned ranks in the Army, and the rankling insult of their treatment in our Colonies—all these things have made our problem something more than a question of political machinery. Home Rule means for Indians the power to remedy these grievances. If Mr. Montagu's proposals are still transitional, as we suppose they will be, and stop short of full responsible government, the interval which separates them from that ideal must not be large, and the grant must carry with it its own latent promise of expansion. If for the time the Central Government is still an English bureaucracy, and if the Viceroy's Council, however it may be developed, falls short of being a sovereign representative body, there must be compensation in the provinces. Unless these at least, subject to the veto of the Viceroy's government, are given responsible government, the scheme will fall dangerously short of satisfying Indian aspirations. A fairly long transitional period already lies behind us, and Lord Morley's reforms are a foundation on which a much more imposing structure of autonomy must now be built. The war has changed all the conditions of our problem. It has made of the "self-determination" of subject peoples an ideal to which all civilized governments do homage, even if it be only lip-homage. The pace of reform has been quickened. Mankind must contrive to cover in a few years an evolution which in normal times might have been spread over a generation.

A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

ONE must not be too serious, even in this world; and if the tragedy of the Irish situation seems to bend a little and give place to a rather acid comedy, let us bend with it. The Comic Muse, indeed, is not scant of material. Of course, there is a Plot; when was Ireland without one? But no one is to be tried for being guilty of it. There is a Bill; but no one dreams of passing it. There is conscription; but though trenches are dug and tanks and machine-guns accumulated, and the air is "tense" with preparations, the Chief Comedian is at the wings, and to the Celtic smile the house dissolves in laughter. Watch his face. He turns to the Tory Party, a-sweat with anxiety about Home Rule. "You do not like my Bill; well, you know the conditions. I had to link Home Rule with Conscription. You refuse the one; I am desolate, but you put it out of my power to give you the other. The country will be held, and Sinn Féin kept on the leash. But with a war on, you must really not expect the impossible."

THAT is, if you like, a rude and cynical interpretation of Ministerial policy in Ireland; and I take it that, if the course it suggests lacks something in dramatic finish, the ingenious Irishman may be trusted to supply the deficiency. "We are back," he will say, "to Kilmainham. Unable to deal with Irish discontent at its source, the British Government aims at putting down its effect, which is social disorder. But is it not committing its old error, which was to confound the National movement with the outrages of the Invincibles? You speak of a German plot, and of German gold used to promote it. If you prove that Sinn Féin is a mere pro-German affair, which is what you seem to have set out to prove, it deserves no sympathy. But you must satisfy us that such a plot exists. You will produce your evidence.

Evidence against whom? And of what? Of an invasion, or a rebellion, or a plan to smuggle arms? If it is serious, and points in any of these directions it must be published and it must be sifted, and the charge brought home not merely against an organization, but against every individual arrested. That is plain justice: if you refuse it, the whole Irish people will try you and find you guilty of patent camouflage."

THIS is an Irish view. But the Government may still have a policy which they think a serious one and with which they hope to counter the Irish resistance. This is the destruction of Sinn Fein. The blow, like that struck at the Land League, is at the organization. The leaders and chief workers are all arrested. So are the clerks in the offices and the men who have promoted Sinn Fein candidatures at the recent elections. If this tactic succeeds and the more moderate Parliamentary party come into power again, they may, it is thought, be offered a tolerable scheme of Home Rule (on federal lines) in exchange for Mr. Devlin's plan of voluntary recruiting. The idea is ingenious. But it depends on the assent of British Toryism and Ulsterism to Home Rule, and of Irish Parliamentarism to the suppression of Sinn Fein by ukase. That is an immense straddle.

As for Liberal opinion, it is pretty clear and firm on the point that Mr. George cannot be allowed to chalk up "Pro-German!" on Hibernia's back and then run away. Yet already the Government are giving it out that there is to be no trial of the interned men, and therefore no specific identification of them with the Plot. Irishmen have been quick to note the mechanical way in which the list of arrests has been made out. The interned consist mostly of the fish who were gathered into the Government's net after the rising and then let out again. To them may be added the organizing staff of Sinn Fein, including even their agents in the East Cavan Election. Is it credible that all these people were in a "German plot"? Mr. Shortt is a lawyer and he must know that the evidential value of a rhetorical impeachment is nothing at all. It is merely an act of political prejudice. But Nationalist Ireland objects to be tarred with pro-Germanism. She has always declared that the number of pro-Germans even in the Sinn Fein movement was very small. At one time she numbered a great and enthusiastic body of pro-Allies. This included many of the Bishops and hundreds of leaders who have joined the anti-conscription movement. To-day, perhaps, the neutralists are in the ascendant—i.e., the people who, pending an Anglo-Irish settlement, think that Ireland should keep out of the war. The problem of dealing with this mass of sentiment is the old problem of British statesmanship in Ireland.

A FRIEND of mine reminds me, after reading the question asked last week in this column, "When was Ireland ungenerous?" of Fox's epigram, "I would trust nothing to Ireland's prudence; everything to her generosity." There is a good deal more statesmanship in that single sentence than in most of the speeches we have heard on Irish policy.

THE Maurice debate has died down, though Sir George Cave will have to answer for his answer to the House on the deletions from the General's letter in the "Chronicle." But I find no pause at all in the effort to discover an alternative to the George Government. Let it be remembered that this has never been wholly, or even chiefly, a Liberal movement. Nor is the Government's war policy its chief point of attack, for the obvious reason that no one knows what that policy is. No; the most serious criticism of the George Ministry is a conservative one. The Unionist rank-and-file is more anti-Asquith than pro-George. But the thinking supermen of the party are definitely anti-George. Their view is half a moral, half a political criticism. They think that he is not to be trusted, that the country in fact has no confidence in him, and that these are times in which confidence is a vital element

of the national safety. They, therefore, look away from him, and from his surrounding band, and point to their conception of a moderate Government, drawn from the best men of all the parties, and headed not by an active, working politician, but by a personage in whom faith would almost instinctively rest. They would like a change of organization, for they think Mr. George's method a bad one, and they judge the resulting inefficiency, waste, and confusion to be very great. Neither this nor any other charge can be precipitated. But the need of the country may be such that all parties may have to waive some prejudices if they would give back to the country the lost form and material of good government.

THE great Hedley Le Bas case is for trial: so I will not examine it on what is called the "merits." This is an age of advertisement; and the Prime Minister is its conspicuous beneficiary. Apparently his monopoly is now disputed. I am not at all surprised that the Northcliffe Press should resent any attempt to counter its campaign of abusive suggestion. Mr. Asquith has his faults, with the rest of us. But he is perhaps the most placable, temperate, dignified figure in our public life. This is the man whom the Northcliffe Press, in the course of its swift descent from Printing House Square to the gutter, has made the daily target of its insults. Why! He is out of office, and probably no politician in England has a greater dislike to resuming it. But I suppose that contingency hourly presents itself to Lord Northcliffe's guilty conscience in extremely alarming colors. Anyway, the stream of abusive insinuation never stops. In my knowledge of journalism I have never seen anything so coarse and so malignant. Anti-Asquith cartoons, epithets, headlines, all the flash coinage of the vulgar mind, are unceasing. Under Lord Northcliffe's monopoly and at his command, this poisoned gas shell explodes daily and hourly over a vast surface of journalistic Britain. It is a great scandal and a great abuse of power, for which, sooner or later, its author will pay the penalty he richly deserves. What the public is now seeing is the beginning of the inevitable effort to beat it down—and to keep it up.

THERE was a point in the Italian Ambassador's excellent speech at the Italian celebration which he was fully entitled to make. This was the part that Italy played in the effort of July and August, 1914, to preserve the world's peace. In that effort the Marquis Imperiali was closely associated with Lord Grey. So great was Italy's confidence in Grey's judgment and pacific aims that the Ambassador's Government gave him *carte blanche* to support any peace proposal he might make. This opportunity was not neglected. The formal tie between Lord Grey and the Ambassador was close and confidential, and the latter was on excellent terms with the representatives of Austria and of Germany. These in turn liked, respected, and thoroughly believed in Grey. In fact, it is a commonplace of the situation that if the enemy Ambassadors had had their way, and had not been thwarted by their Governments, there would have been no war. Grey's absolutely disinterested intervention for peace would have been accepted, the Serbian storm would have blown over, and a durable settlement might have been achieved. In that beneficent task the Marquis Imperiali, as I have said, played a loyal and distinguished part.

I HEAR a story from Tipperary, illustrating the Sinn Fein temper. On condemnation, a Sinn Fein prisoner in the dock began to sing "The Dark Rosaleen" with a fine, impassioned "gesture." He fully expected to be stopped at the first two lines, but, to his embarrassed amazement, his singing was received with profound silence by the Court, and he had to continue the difficult and complicated music to Mangan's long ode up to the glorious end. He got six months, but whether the sentence was passed before or after the performance (or because of it), I am not told.

A WAYFARER.

Life and Letters.

"DIFFICULT PEOPLE."

THE enormous land of Russia now lies almost isolated from the world. From provinces formerly reckoned in her Empire—from Finland or Courland, the Ukraine, Poland, or the Caucasus—a rumor sometimes comes, and, as at the momentary lifting of a cloud, those who know the country so briefly revealed can dimly conjecture what may be happening there. But these provinces were never embodied in Russia. They were never more than the unwilling parts of a disunited Empire, and, except in the case of the Ukraine and Poland, their inhabitants were not akin to the Russian race. Even the Ukraine and Poland possessed a distinct, though cognate, language, and none of the races had intermarried largely with their nominal rulers. Of the real Russia—the Russia of the Russian people—we hear hardly anything at all.

There it lies, that almost interminable plain, monotonous, indistinctive, hardly even undulating with rising ground, marked only by slow-moving rivers, marshes, and great forests of birch and pine. Only two cities worthy of the name, and a few far-scattered towns, rise from its mournful surface; but at no great distance apart stand small, unknown villages, their wooden or mud-built houses arranged in one irregular line on each side of a lengthy street, and near the centre of the street rises a whitewashed church, roofed with green plates of iron, and surmounted with a blue or golden dome, like an onion bulb. In a wide circle around each village, the land is "striped" with thin oblongs of cultivation—the holdings of the peasant commune, till lately apportioned anew among its members at least once in every generation, and in most cases probably apportioned still, in spite of Stolypin's law of private possession. That is the true Russia, and over the whole of it a curtain of silence has fallen.

What is happening in those cities and small towns now? Is a three-horsed equipage ever seen on Sunday solemnly driving along the Neva embankment? Does the variegated crowd move up and down the Nyevesky Prospekt of an afternoon, and in these "white nights" of May are the sleepless restaurants upon the Islands crammed? Do the devout still hustle each other round the Virgin's picture at the Kremlin gate, and is her shrine still loaded with silver offerings? Are the summer residences in the country let, and have any of the landowners' country houses escaped ruin by indignant equality? Do Lancastrian cotton-spinners still superintend the mills at Jaroslav? Does the melancholy citadel of Tula stand? What do the villages look like now, and how do the millions on millions of peasants live? Have they seed for this year's crop, or was all eaten in the winter? War has devoured the horses, and how does a man plough his "stripe" or bring the firewood from the communal forest and the hay from the communal meadow without a horse? Does the village still pay a priest to perform the rites of life and death, or do villagers go unchristened, unmarried, and buried like the dogs? How was the soldier received, and what did he say of the war, when at last he crawled to his home? Has vodka returned with peace, and does a Social Democracy retain the monopoly of its manufacture, and pocket its revenue for the State?

To these crowding questions we have no answer yet. The life of English correspondents in the towns and cities is probably insecure and uncomfortable; in the villages probably dangerous. In her communications to this journal a few weeks ago, Miss Doty showed us what a foreign traveller must endure even on the main railways and in the capital. But the only account of the present life in the villages hitherto given us by the Russians themselves has been an extract from Maxim Gorky's paper. It was but a glimpse, and the glimpse was dismal. Coming from so revolutionary a source, the report would not be likely to exaggerate evil, and to the generous idealists who have taught us to regard the Russian peasant as a Christlike saint with eyes always fixed on

heaven, it was discouraging. For it depicted the villagers as chiefly occupied, not merely in grabbing the confiscated lands of the Tsars and county families (that would be natural, if not praiseworthy), but in rending each other like wild beasts for the possession of the most fertile bits. Had we trusted to the charming guides who, in enchanting language, have sung to us the innocent delights of Russia's Arcady, we should have imagined the respected sages of each community processing round the new estates with hymns and holy Eikons, justly partitioning the ground, giving to each family according to its need, and reserving the richest acres for the widows and orphans of the war. Far different was the truth, as Maxim Gorky's paper revealed it. All the peasant's bloodthirsty passion for land was let loose without control. If only the landowners had been murdered in their comfortable houses one could have attributed the violence to a natural outburst of rage among people poverty-stricken and suppressed for centuries. But it was against each other that the villagers turned in cruel ferocity, inflamed with avarice, seizing all they could, regardless of justice, and murdering even the poor.

It is strange; for, after all, there was a basis of truth in the conception which represented the Russian peasants as an amalgam of angels, Tolstoy's, and the inhabitants of a Garden Suburb. Of all great races, except the Chinese, and, perhaps, the Hindus, the Russian peasants are the least warlike, the most incapable of war. They possess a real sense of human brotherhood, and on occasion will display an almost superhuman lovingkindness. It is not without cause that their word for prisoners and captives is "the unfortunate," and their name for themselves, not "moujiks," but "Christians." In the last revolution, when they had publicly resolved to murder a landowner, they publicly advised him to escape, and afterwards supplied him with a weekly cartload of provisions from his own estate, because he was not accustomed to starvation. All that is true, but then Russia is the land of contradictions—hitherto the land of tyranny and the greatest social freedom, of the wildest extravagance and of pitiless thrift, of doctrinaire theorizing and closest contact with the earth, of heartfelt religion and the foulest rites. So, too, of brotherly kindness and the most atrocious cruelty; for the same peasants who stone a party of "sportsmen" for their brutality in shooting crows, will light a fire under a horse's belly or run a thorn into his eye to make him drag a cart out of the mud.

Pictures of these violent contradictions are found throughout Russian literature. We find them in Dostoievsky up and down; in Tourgenieff's "Virgin Soil" and "Sportsman's Sketches"; and even in Tolstoy, who sometimes writes as though no one but a peasant had a soul, and yet in the peasant drama of "The Power of Darkness" revealed the lowest depths of human abomination. There is Tchekhoff, too, the master of short stories. Steadfastly continuing her high service to literature, Mrs. Constance Garnett has lately given us two more volumes of his tales and studies, named "The Wife" and "The Witch," from characters sharply contrasted in name and nature (Chatto & Windus are the publishers). One of the stories, describing a village family under the curse of a father's avarice and outbursts of frenzied rage, is entitled "Difficult People," and we might apply the phrase to the whole Russian race. Among the educated, we are shown the peculiar moodiness, self-analysis, and melancholy; the tendency to live by theory and first principles; the impracticable imaginings of the doctrinaire:—

"We Russians of the educated class," says a character in "About Love," "have a partiality for these questions that remain unanswered. Love is usually poeticized, decorated with roses, nightingales; we Russians decorate our loves with these momentous questions, and select the most uninteresting of them, too."

In those sentences one may really discover the Bolshevik methods and the secret of their success. Similarly, the description of a village fire in a story called "Peasants" shows us the reason of Russia's repeated failures in the war:—

"The village elder, Antip Syedelnikov, as swarthy and black-haired as a gipsy, went up to the hut with an axe, and hacked out the windows one after another—no one knew why—then began chopping up the roof.

"The peasants stood round in a crowd, doing nothing but staring at the fire. No one knew what to do, no one had the sense to do anything, though there were stacks of wheat, hay, barns, and piles of faggots standing all round."

So in these poignant volumes we pass from one picture to another—pictures of lifelong misery, of incapacity, of the cruelty which will turn a woman stark-naked out into the street, and thrash an unfaithful wife almost to death, whilst her lover stands by assisting. And the medieval sentimentalists who bid us adore the Russian peasant's mystic piety, and seek to exclude knowledge from Russian villages as they would exclude Satan himself, might learn the following passage by heart:—

"On Elijah's Day they drank, at the Assumption they drank, at the Ascension they drank. The Feast of the Intercession was the parish holiday for Zhukovo, and the peasants used to drink then for three days. . . . On the first day of the feast the Tchikildyeevs killed a sheep and ate of it in the morning, at dinner-time, and in the evening; they ate it ravenously, and the children got up at night to eat more. Kiryak was fearfully drunk for three whole days; he drank up everything, even his boots and cap, and beat Marya so terribly that they had to pour water over her. And then they were all ashamed and sick."

We cannot doubt it is all true. Russian writers have a naked and unashamed passion for truth. And yet, in spite of all these contradictions—in spite of ignorance, superstition, outbursts of cruelty, bestial unrestraint, fumbling incapacity, and the worship of wooden theories—the Russians remain one of the noblest and most intelligent of peoples. "When I hear Russian spoken," said Tourgenieff in his exile, "I know I belong to a great nation." When we read Russian literature—the greatest literature of the last fifty years—we may understand the meaning of that boast. It may be that, after all, the future lies with a race so daring in experiment, so averse from the comforts of compromise; and that, after all, the Russians will guide this distracted world out of the bloody slough in which her present rulers, diplomatists, and social systems have made her wallow.

THE INDICTMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

WE have sometimes wondered from what direction the knowledge and energy necessary for the reformation of our whole educational system would come. For the word education in England means something different to almost everyone who talks about it. It may either stand for a barren sectarian controversy, or for the training we think well to give to the children of the poor, or for the totally different training which we reserve for the children of the rich, or for some other of the many phases of the system which we have in this country—a system which, in essentials, is one of class education. The Education Bill now before Parliament is itself the best evidence of the chaotic nature of our system, and of the fact that we do not think, as, for instance, it is possible to do in America, in terms of a public co-ordinated system, free and common to all classes. For the Bill makes no attempt to claim free secondary and higher education for all children, irrespective of their social status. It contents itself by crowning the curriculum of the elementary school with the coping-stone of a continuation class. Now, however, the hammer of criticism has fallen on the idols of the past. This is the special work of Mr. Alec Waugh (now happily reported alive) in his much-criticised "Loom of Youth."

The "Loom of Youth" is the most powerful indictment of the conventional English public school that has appeared in our literature. It is the work of a brilliant boy written at seventeen, and it is obviously largely autobiographical. But it is much more than this. It is a photographic plate of the everyday life of the public

school. It is as though the spectator saw it all through the medium of a cinema film. This photographic quality demands a much more reasoned criticism than that given by the schoolmasters who have hastened to repudiate it.

What are the main lines of its representation of the public schools? It is a picture of a collection of boys, possessing indeed a certain herd instinct and sympathy, but banded together in an organization incompatible with culture or except in a very limited sense with any form of healthy intellectual or social life. The boys consciously resist each temptation to do honest work, or to show interest in it. Between them and their masters exists a barrier, rarely broken, and chiefly built upon false conventions of the past. The life is marked by a certain brutality, which shows itself alike in word and in deed. The public opinion is rigid and conventional. It gives no freedom, whilst allowing and condoning license. It is a life of false issues, given to worship of the athletic god, and offering a united front of resistance to any competing or broadening influence. The natural expression of the emotional side of a boy's nature is repressed, and finds other satisfaction. The innocent boy is coarsened; he becomes one of the herd. Religion at its highest is "good form"; its more solemn rites to be observed ("I'm in for the Confirmation Stakes") as a way of release from school work. It is a frankly barbaric picture, with some redeeming touches barely visible on the large canvas.

The realism with which the life of the boys is traced is extended to the masters. They are described as incapable of exercising real influence on the boys nominally under their care. We say nominally, for really the boys are a community to themselves, living a life rigidly apart. Of true pastoral care, the shepherd-ing of the flock, there is no trace.

Such is the indictment of the "Loom of Youth," and the inquiry at once arises, How far the conditions and atmosphere described in the book are typical of the public school system. The schools as a whole have been protected from popular criticism. Their isolation, their independence of all public aid and inspection, their social prestige, the camaraderie of their members—all these influences tend to shield them in a degree which would not be possible in cases where there was public responsibility. In Mr. Lunn's "Harrovians" there is this passage:—

"I wonder," said Peter thoughtfully, "what would happen if anyone wrote an article describing what really goes on in this House."

"Oh, nothing," said Manson. "If anyone says anything against the public schools who hasn't been to one, everybody shouts, 'My dear man, what can you know about them? Nobody but a public-school man can understand the fine old public-school spirit.' And if you have been to one, everybody says, 'You horrid cad, criticising your dear old Alma Mater. Where's your giddy patriotism?'"

The reality of this attitude of mind will be generally recognized. At the same time, it would be unfair and illogical on the strength of a single book, dealing with one school, to assume that all schools are alike. What we are entitled to do, and what the public interest requires, is to see how far the author is confirmed by other authorities who have abandoned the conventional standpoint of Mr. Lunn's "Harrovians."

As to the special social evil so frankly dealt with by Mr. Waugh, we will only say that the author of "Tom Brown" suggests the existence of the same state of things, and hardly any realistic story of public school life, as opposed to mere stories for boys, fails to confirm Mr. Waugh. Mr. Lionel Portman's "Hugh Rendal" is a typical example. No honest headmaster could deny the reality of the danger. But if we put this difficult question on one side, there remains substantial support for the case set forth in the "Loom of Youth." "The Harrovians" and "Hugh Rendal" both give us the picture of an organized society with the same false values, strong enough in its enforced unity to resist outside influence or change. The dominance of athleticism, and the basing of all distinction and privilege upon its worship, is shown throughout. This is also the theme

developed with even greater force in one of the best and wittiest stories of public school life written in recent years, Mr. Turley's "Band of Brothers." Here is an English family where the standards of the school have become the religion of the home, and the father, himself an old boy, cares only that his boys, all sent in turn to the same school, should worship the gods before which he bowed, and send home the same sacred symbols—cups and caps and colors for the sacred "pot" room—the holy of holies in the country home where even the talk of visitors was hushed. All his boys follow the right path except the youngest, and the story of his apostasy is not only a satire but a tragedy.

The author of one of the greatest contributions to our knowledge of boy life, Dr. Stanley Hall, has reminded us in his "Adolescence" that the feelings of sympathy and pity become exquisite in youth, and that these qualities, the germ of the moral faculties, require the most careful culture. The development of boys' characters is closely associated with the religion of the schools, and the irony with which Mr. Waugh approaches this side of school life is one of the most arresting aspects of his book. Is this attitude just? It is confirmed by the writers we have mentioned. But we should like to call especial attention to a little known book written by Dr. Gilkes, the late headmaster of Dulwich College, a name of honor throughout the educational world. It is entitled "The Thing that Hath Been; or a Young Man's Mistakes." It is a picture of a public school from the standpoint of the masters. But it is as formidable an attack upon one aspect of the public schools as anything contained in Mr. Waugh's book. Dr. Gilkes reveals with remorseless candor the arrogance, the class consciousness, the intellectual and social exclusiveness of the staff. It is a great impeachment of the religion of the school, and of the character not only of the head but of the master in orders who was specially concerned with its teaching and application.

Dr. Gilkes shows us a school religion, formal, unrelated to the needs and life of the boy, a thing of dogmas and verbal expressions, preached by men whose characters were held in contempt by the boys they addressed. He shows the dead set made by the staff against one of their number coming from a different social class and refusing to accept the current hypocrisies. When one of the most eminent of living schoolmasters desired to present this book to the library of one of our most famous schools, it was refused on the ground that it contained an argument in which Christianity came off second best! What indeed the book shows as clearly as the "Loom of Youth" is the entire absence of religious influences in the true sense of the word. The gates to the world of spiritual ideals were locked. No reader of Dr. Gilkes's book will feel that the Bishop of London has taken us very far along the path of reform in the suggestion that we should send more ordained clergymen into the public schools.

When we remember that the greatest influence in the life of youth is the personality of those who surround them, and have care of them, we cannot dismiss either the warning sketches of so many experienced writers, or the still more sombre pages of Mr. Waugh. Very occasionally do the saint and the hero emerge. The Arnold of Judge Hughes's pages would redeem any system, and make short work of its traditions. But in these pictures of real schools and real men, we find few Arnolds. The portraits are drawn sometimes in scorn, as in the "Loom of Youth"; sometimes in fierce resentment, as in Mr. Vachell's Retford in "The Hill"; sometimes with tolerant humor, as in Mr. Bradby's "Lanchester Tradition"; sometimes with despair, mingled with pity, as in "Mr. Perrin and Dr. Traill." Where the master, as in many cases, is shown as an average well-meaning man, the system, with its accumulated traditions, is too strong for him, and he looks helplessly on at machinery he can neither stop nor control. Such indeed is the case with the head, drawn, with obvious sympathy, by Mr. Waugh.

There is, then, strong independent support for the essential truth of Mr. Waugh's book. This does not

mean that there are not many devoted men in the ranks of public schoolmasters. It does not mean that they fail to turn out many brave, healthy, attractive boys. It does not mean that there are not schools seeking with wisdom and enthusiasm to raise the level of the system and to lead along the path of reform. What it does mean is that against many of these old foundations there is a grave and unanswered case.

A STATE BONUS FOR ALL.

It is rather strange that we should hear and talk so much of Socialism and Syndicalism, so little of Communism. For the last word and the idea it connotes are older in origin, while the actual process is more deeply embedded in our political and economic institutions. Not merely were the early teaching and practices of the Christianity which we profess deeply charged with the communistic treatment of property, but every civilized State has made its compromise with private property upon the basis that the rights and needs of the community as such must first be met. It may, however, be argued that the claims of the State or Commonwealth do not constitute the reality of Communism, which signifies, not so much the claim of the aggregate community upon the property or produce of its members, as the claim of each individual to his share of that property or produce irrespective of his particular contribution to its making. The family is in this sense the typical community. Outside the family, "charity" gives a loose moral recognition of the right, and the Poor Laws of "civilized" countries form a cheap compounding of the swollen rights of private property with this communistic sentiment and custom. Its basis is a tacit recognition that the right to life and to the means of living is one which every ordered community must and ought to recognize and secure. In most communities some access to the land, as a maintenance, serves as a practical fulfilment of these private claims, and the disappearance of the "commons" and the consequent creation of a landless proletariat were ill compensated by a degraded and degrading Poor Law. But bad as our Poor Law has been, it has served to keep just alive the communist conception of the individual right to the material means of life, irrespective of work or merit. For, though our Poor Law has always striven to attach the obligation to perform productive service as a condition of maintenance, this is not its final logic. A man has the legal right to live without performing the equivalent work if he stubbornly insists on doing so.

It might seem that the acknowledgment of such a right endangered the very existence of society. So it would, if man were by nature idle and destitute of social feeling. But if, on the other hand, there is in him some instinct or impulse to work and to co-operate with his fellows upon fair terms, such a measure of communism as amounts to taking from the common stock what is needed to keep him alive, irrespective of the part he contributes to that stock, may be a quite feasible arrangement. At any rate, the conviction that it is feasible underlies a good many of the modern reforms in the condition of labor. While the Old Age Pension is the most open declaration of this policy, the main trend of the laws and trade usages making for a "Common Rule" moves in the same direction. The regulations for a maximum standard wage, based upon some accepted notice of the maintenance of a worker's family, unemployed relief, education, and Employers' Liability Acts, are all permeated, consciously or unconsciously, with the communist principle.

Now comes one of those troublesome persons who wish John Bull to confront quite frankly the rule which has underlain his fumbings. Mr. Dennis Milner, with his "Scheme for a State Bonus," is urging labor men and liberal employers to take their courage in both hands and make out of the general income of the community a direct monetary provision for the primary needs of the population on a frankly communistic plan. The simplicity of his proposal is staggering. Let the State take

by taxation one-fifth of the total monetary and real income, and assign it to the respective families of the nation, in proportion to their size, for their primal needs. In other words, distribute 20 per cent of current income on a communal basis, the other 80 per cent. being paid as now "in return for services rendered." Such an arrangement, were it carried out upon the pre-war basis of incomes and prices, would, he calculates, mean that every ordinary-sized family of two adults and three children would receive the allowance of 21s. 3d. per week, or £55 per annum. This provision would yield varying degrees of benefit to some 90 per cent. of the population, making due allowance for taxes as offsets against the allowance which would be paid to rich and poor alike. The immediate effects of such a policy, Mr. Dennis Milner argues, would be the total abolition of primary poverty in the sense defined by Mr. Rowntree, a great reduction in pauperising charity and in social expenditure upon vices, diseases, and misfortunes, largely due to poverty. Since a great deal of public and private income is expended now, one way or another, in such provisions against the fruits of poverty, the "cost" of the proposal would be much smaller than might at first appear.

But, of course, in order to make his appeal really effective, Mr. Milner has to go much further, and to show not merely that his proposal would not sap the sources of industry and of production, but would stimulate them, so increasing the productivity of the community, that the communalizing of one-fifth of its income would still leave adequate scope to the play of ordinary individualistic motives. Readers will differ as to the success of Mr. Milner's plea. He thinks that the relief from the cramping and degrading influences of insecurity will liberate higher spiritual forces which, even on the economic plane, will justify such an experiment. But it is only fair to recognize that our State and Nation, as others, are committing themselves in a number of different ways to the same end, the provision of economic security for all, irrespective of individual efficiency or merit. To the older individualism, sustained by the conviction of the necessity of the struggle for life on a basis of merely personal fitness, such a policy spells national suicide. But the common-sense alike of peoples and of statesmen has rightly condemned this *laissez-faire* policy. It has substituted communistic doles, instead of seeking to lay down a minimum *regimen* of communistic distribution.

The real criticism of Mr. Dennis Milner's proposal will be directed against the over-estimate he will be said to make of the goodness of human nature. Put crudely, this criticism will take shape in two chief objections. First, if an ordinary agricultural or other low-paid working family has secured to it an increase of some 30s. per week (allowing for the rise of prices), a large proportion of the wage-earners will either live in idleness, or will only do a little work when they like. Mr. Milner replies that even the Southern agricultural laborer would not act so, and that a brief experiment in slacking, assisted by the exhortations of his wife, would drive him back to the fields. He will want to supplement the bare provision of the State by the high wages which he would earn from his improved position as a bargainer with the farmer. Security would beget not sloth but ambition; public opinion would condemn idle parasites; the improved organization of labor upon the new basis of economic independence would, by raising the share of labor, contribute towards a constant elevation of the standard of living among all grades of workers. This plea no doubt has some validity. The questions will be How much? and how rapidly can these new motives operate? Perhaps this is the great issue of social faith and courage in the challenge of Mr. Dennis Milner. There would be some slackers and shirkers. It is possible: we have even heard of the idle rich. But how many? And would their slacking be more than compensated by the spur to efficiency generated by the new security?

The other chief objection will be the great size of the total demands upon the incomes of the well-to-do. If Mr. Dennis Milner's one-fifth were the measure of the

required communism, it might be borne. But if another fifth must be added for other demands of the State and City (and that is not an immoderate estimate), this would mean, upon any graduated scale, that more than half of the income of all the well-to-do, and a much larger proportion of those of the very rich, is taken from them. Granted they can afford such sacrifices and that the redistribution thus brought about would greatly increase the total utility of the expenditure, the two questions remain, first, "How far are you interfering with some selfish spring to productivity which will not act under the new self-denying ordinance?" Secondly, "How far can this interference with the play of private selfish profiteering be operated safely in the area of a single State-nation?" These are doubts, not so much directed against the fundamentals of human nature, as against its bad education. If it be true that a bold reorganization of all industry, so as to give new controls and new opportunities for all concerned, will liberate great hitherto wasted powers of invention, co-operation, and enlarged productivity, such a progressive community could, no doubt easily afford to make the preliminary communism which Mr. Milner asks. His reply, no doubt, would be: "Make the experiment, and the result will be a public confidence that will liberate those very forces of increased productivity which you require." Security of livelihood, high wages, progress in the general standard of consumption of the people, will at once act as an expanding and a steadying demand for the production of useful wealth, while the consumption of this will, by its physical and moral reactions, constantly enlarge the intelligent efficiency of labor. The process, of course, would be a levelling one, and must come up against the prejudices, the interests, and the defensive and aggressive powers of "property." But we are living in a time in which large readjustments are inevitable, and the faith needed for large experiments of a productive kind must correspond with the faith which is our underlying motive and justification for the far more awful experiment in destruction upon which we are busily engaged.

Present-Day Problems.

THE STROKE IN IRELAND.

DUBLIN.

VIOLENT as was the blow which fell on Friday night, the ominous cloud of foreboding hangs less heavily over Ireland this week than last. Arrests and deportations have been so usual in Ireland's history that people take them as a matter of course. But conscription was new to them. The threatened attempt to compel a small race to sacrifice the best of its remaining life in fighting for a great Power which it had been taught for centuries to regard as its enemy appalled them for its inevitable results. A terrible act was to be added to the long tragedy of England's treatment of that "other island," and it was felt that an appeal to "neutral" nations, or even to America, would now be more vain than heretofore. Almost in vain it has generally been, and, by a peculiar irony, it is England's reputation for justice and humanity which has caused the failure. In an excellent pamphlet called "An Irish Apologia" (Maunsell. Dublin), Mr. Warre Wells quotes a passage from an article by Emile Montégut in the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*" of 1855, where, writing of John Mitchel and "Young Ireland," that critic said:—

"If the oppressor of Ireland were Austria or Russia, no invective, no anger would suffice to denounce the injustice and cruelty of the tyrant. Unhappily, the oppressor of Ireland is England—Protestant England, constitutional, liberal, industrial, and trading England, the most accomplished type of the modern nation, the model of nineteenth-century civilization! How could the men of our time be expected to take Ireland's part?"

So there was little hope last week. But since the events of Friday the clouds have lifted, though it is hard to say

why. No doubt, Lord French's Proclamation, with its phrases about "voluntary enlistment" and the hopes of thus securing a contribution of men "without resort to compulsion," has contributed to the relief. One would like to believe that, having discovered how resolutely the national will was opposed to service under compulsion, the Government had abandoned its purpose in a mood of wisdom or generosity. But, where wisdom and generosity are concerned, few Irish people give the Government any benefit of a doubt. At the best, they believe that the Government has realized the impossibility of enforcing conscription against such a resistance, except by a system of bloodshed such as would discredit their objects in the war; and that the arrests for an alleged pro-German plot were designed to reassure their English supporters of their capacity for strong and determined action. Others detect the intention of reviving conscription when the new Home Rule schemes collapse and the appeal for voluntary enlistment fails (neither supposition unlikely in Ireland's present mood). Others suppose the Government has, at the last moment, discovered how seriously the threatened agricultural strike in Ireland would affect the food supply of England and the Army. For Fortune's wheel has turned; England is now the distressful country, and well-to-do English visitors contemplating the butchers' shops in Dublin can realize the ecstasy of tigers gazing upon peaceful herds.

This food supply is so important that one may pause over a few figures. Speaking to the Council of Agriculture in Dublin last week, Sir W. T. Russell said that one-and-a-half million extra acres had been ploughed since 1916—an extension of 60 per cent. But the "Freeman's Journal" of May 16th observed that, since the beginning of the war, the extension was 72 per cent. :—

"To every ten acres tilled in 1914 the country now tills seventeen and a quarter acres. Before the war Ireland exported to Great Britain food valued at £35,000,000, at the prices then current, out of a total production of £57,000,000 worth of human food. The increased production every year since has all been exported across the Irish sea. In 1916 Ireland exported £80,000,000 worth of food to Great Britain. This year's sowings give promise, if all goes well with the harvest, of an addition of 60 per cent. of the whole crop to our exportable surplus over 1916. Last year's export of potatoes amounted to 300,000 tons. This is more than double the pre-war export. The exports from Ireland of fat stock increased as the supplies in the British markets were reduced, and the shipments from Ireland were equal to four-fifths of the cattle and sheep on offer. In every department of agricultural output, Ireland has saved the situation in Great Britain."

Of males in Ireland (all ages) 57.4 per cent. live by agriculture and fishing, as against 12.3 per cent. (omitting ages under ten years) in England and Wales, and 14.4 per cent. in Scotland. These statistics are supplied by Professor C. H. Oldham, of the Irish National University, who also tells me that, by the Census of 1911, there were only 776,637 males of twenty to forty-five years in Ireland, and the number has certainly not increased since then; for Ireland has contributed at least 130,000 recruits to the army, for one thing. If agriculturists and shipbuilders were exempted from conscription, there would not be much margin left for recruits. But the agriculturists, at all events, will not accept exemption for themselves alone. If conscription is enforced upon any class, the farmers will stop work, and the women engaged in agriculture, or capable of taking the men's places, will join in the protest. From a carefully drawn-up document upon agriculture published last week, I take the following sentences :—

"Meetings for agricultural purposes have ceased to interest; in many cases they have ceased to be held. Organization is crumbling away. All through the country business is in suspense, and the business of Ireland is agriculture. An office which is in constant correspondence with farmers is almost idle from the smallness of its mail. This state of things will continue so long as the conscription cloud remains; and this is the critical time of year for farmers. If conscription is actually enforced, farming will cease altogether in Ireland. Apart from the question of the drain of man-power from the land, farmers will not attend to their business. The country will be ablaze, and there will be no time for farming."

Two things are certain: conscription in Ireland would mean a net loss to our fighting strength, for it would not

bring us anything like the number of soldiers that must be kept here to enforce it; and it would mean a great reduction of the food supply for our civil population and for the Army. The reduction of our reputation is too obvious to mention. Comparisons between the Government's proposal and the Prussian treatment of Germanized Denmark or Germanized Poland are freely drawn here.

Rightly or wrongly, however, it is believed that the threat of conscription, so disastrous to both races, is now withdrawn. Rightly or wrongly, it is also believed that the Government has seized this occasion to arrest the Sinn Féin leaders in order to "save face" and "cover its tracks." It may be so, although many, or perhaps most, of the Sinn Féiners themselves regard the stroke as part of a design to stamp out the possibility of future rebellion in Ireland! The "German plot," these people say, is only an excuse for suppression, while a wall of silence is being built around the island by censorship and the refusal of "permits" to enter the island itself and certain of its counties. Meantime, they await the Government's evidence of a plot, and remember that, by Mr. Shortt's own statement of last Friday night, "the Irish Government are fully aware that the number of Irishmen and Irishwomen who are in active co-operation with the German enemy is very small." The worst is that in Ireland, as in all countries long held in subjection by an internal or foreign despotism, the greatest admiration is given, not necessarily to the wise and prudent, but to the most defiant. "Courage is never wanting in Ireland," one of Ireland's oldest and most devoted leaders in the past said to me yesterday; "but judgment is rarer."

That sentence marks the distinction between the two main sections of the Irish national movement now, as the "Nationalists" conceive it. Certainly, the sentence with which Gavan Duffy began the first leader in the first number of "The Nation" (October 15th, 1842) still holds true :—

"With all the nicknames that serve to delude and divide us—with all their Orangemen and Ribbonmen, Torymen and Whigmen, Ultras and Moderados, and heaven knows what rubbish besides, there are, in truth, but two parties in Ireland: those who suffer from her national degradation, and those who profit by it."

That is as true now as in the terrible 'Forties, and, so far as Irish patriotism goes, there is no distinction between one national party and another. But still I cannot withhold a reverent sympathy from ageing leaders who have for years devoted their lives to the service of their country and have suffered much for her in the past, always striving to win justice, and to effect some kind of reconciliation between her and the Power across St. George's Channel, but now watching in despair as all their long designs for peace and hopeful accommodation are crumbled away by the rising waves of intense international animosity. It is not only our Government's broken pledges which frustrate their hopes—not only the shelving of the Home Rule Act, the admission of the extreme "Carsonites" into the Government of both countries, or the successive executions of 1916. They are faced besides by a resurrection of the old romantic or religious passion for Ireland—a passion which does not care two straws for comfortable compromise or the enjoyments of peaceful prosperity, but seizes the heart with a divine "possession," regarding no ideal as impracticable, and accounting personal loss as so much glory won.

H. W. N.

Letters to the Editor.

AN APPEAL TO LIBERAL DEMOCRATS.

SIR,—The undersigned, who comprise Liberal candidates for Parliament and workers in the Liberal Cause, have formulated the following provisional statement of Democratic policy, to which they invite adherence by those so minded :—

We affirm our belief in a League of Nations as necessary "to make the world safe for democracy," and we hold that all possible steps should be taken to this end. In order to prevent the course of the war and the conditions of peace being affected by diplomatic arrangements unknown to the British peoples, we urge that machinery should be devised at once to enable Parliament to exercise an effective control over

the aims and direction of foreign policy and that all diplomatic engagements should require ratification by Parliament. We applaud every effort to bring about co-operation between progressive elements in all countries as an essential preliminary to the inauguration of a League of Nations.

Further, we hold strongly that full restoration should be made of the freedom of speech and printing, of an uncensored Press (save for the purposes of national defence), and of the rights of civil trial, believing that such conditions are essential in peace and during war for the preservation of a sound democratic State.

We desire to add that we put forward this statement of Democratic policy in the view that the matters referred to should not only be affirmed but pressed in Parliament and outside as directly related to the present national situation and its redress.—Yours, &c.,

MACKENZIE BELL.
JAMES JOHNSTON.
HOLFORD KNIGHT.
W. H. PRINGLE.
T. P. STEVENS.
ERNEST YOUNG.
PERCY HANDCOCK (Hon. Sec.).

1, Egerton Mansions, Brompton Road, S.W.

A CAPITAL LEVY.

SIR,—You and Professor Bone and Mr. Pethick Lawrence differ from each other and I disagree, on some points, with all of you. Let me try to put my views in some short propositions.

I should, first, like to say that I am in favor of a capital levy after the war, because, in agreement with you, I see no better or safer alternative.

1. The object of a capital levy is to provide an interest-bearing fund, raised from accumulated capital, to meet the interest on the war debt, or part of it.

2. The capital levy will not be a complete substitute for income-tax; it will merely enable that tax to be restricted to a lower figure than it would otherwise be.

3. No one suggests that a levy, whether assessed on capital or on income, could, in one year or in any short period of years, take more than a strictly limited and reasonable portion of the goods and services produced in the period. So far, Professor Bone is right, but he misunderstands how a capital levy would be raised and how it would operate.

4. The interest on the war debt and some annual contribution towards the redemption of the principal outstanding must be provided. The money for this must be raised by taxation of wage earners and of owners of property, or, in other words, of accumulated capital, in equitable proportions.

5. If there is no capital levy the amount which will have to be raised by annual taxation will be so large that, if raised mainly by income-tax, the tax would be too high. It would encourage evasion, discourage saving, and depress industry. Wage earners must pay a fair share, either through direct or indirect taxation, but the policy of leaving that share to be determined by an annual political struggle would endanger the harmony and stability of the State.

6. The owners of accumulated capital must accept the burden, in the interests of safety, and in order to protect the sources of their wealth and the maintenance and development of industrial prosperity.

7. The burden cannot be evaded. It must be provided for gradually, as Professor Bone thinks, out of annual income. The only question is, out of whose income?

8. It is a fair subject for discussion whether the burden should be thrown on (1) the owners of existing accumulated capital; (2) the owners of future savings—i.e., the capital to be accumulated in the future; (3) future wage earners? And in what shares? But this question is wholly independent of the question whether the share to be borne by the owners of property should be raised, after the war, partly by a capital levy or wholly by an annual income-tax. And confusion of thought is avoided by separating the discussion of these distinct questions.

9. I suggest that there are strong grounds for believing that a very large share of the burden ought to be borne by the owners of capital, and on that assumption I confine myself to the discussion of the question whether they should provide for it by a capital levy or leave it to be provided by an annual levy of income-tax.

10. A capital levy could not be a levy in cash. It would be on an assessment on capital value, and would be met either by surrender of interest-bearing securities of the requisite value, or, in cases where no such securities are available, by some form of bond under which the grantor would undertake liability for the principal and interest thereof.

11. The war debt is a charge upon future income. The capital levy would neither change its character nor increase the burden upon the capital resources of the community. The State is now debtor on behalf of each owner of capital. After the levy the owner of capital would become debtor to the State for his share, and would either discharge his debt by transfer of securities, or acknowledge his debt by some form of bond, if he did not possess any readily transferable securities. The burden on capital would not thereby be increased. It would merely be allocated to individuals instead of being, as at present, an undivided burden.

12. A capital levy would not necessarily, as Mr. Pethick

Lawrence suggests, cancel any part of the war debt, and thus bring about deflation. Inflation will cease when the Government cease borrowing and deflation will come when demand sinks. The effective demand of the Government for goods and services has been for the equivalent of the principle of the debt. The effective demand each year of the present holders of the debt will only be for the equivalent of the interest. If securities can be sold, and their proceeds applied to cancellation of war debt, well and good; but it is doubtful whether this would be practicable to any great extent. The more probable event is that the Government would hold the transferred securities and dispose of them gradually.

13. Mr. Pethick Lawrence is, I suggest, wrong in preferring a capital levy to an income-tax on the ground that the former would be imposed once and for all at current values whilst an income-tax would have to meet a fixed charge year by year while prices are falling. If there is no capital levy the Government, having to meet the fixed annual charge would have to raise each year sufficient money to meet it. If therefore prices fall, more goods and services would be required as the equivalent of the income-tax. But if there were a capital levy a fall in prices would have the same effect. The reduced prices might mean reduced profits and consequently a reduction in the income from the transferred securities. This would not necessarily happen, but if it did the Government would have to supplement the income by raising more revenue by income-tax or some other tax, and those who had been subjected to the capital levy would have made a good bargain. The value of the securities in the hands of the Government would fall, but the value would equally have fallen if the securities had remained in the hands of their former owners.

14. The importance and justification of a capital levy seem to me to lie in this, that it would fix liability for a large part of the burden on the owners of existing accumulated capital. The nations have incurred the war debt. They must provide for the payment of the interest upon it. It is better for the future welfare of the nation and for the future security of the owners of property that this financial settlement should be made now, rather than that it should be left as a source of social, political, and economic disturbance and unrest hereafter. To those who die it matters little whether they have, before death, discharged the liability they have incurred by their patriotic fervor for the war or not. They will, if there is a capital levy, leave a smaller estate to their heirs, who will save in death duties, but they will have done their part to leave a more secure and stable commonwealth. To those who live the benefit in security will endure, and if they are deprived of the satisfaction of imagining themselves more wealthy than they really are, having regard to the war debt they have incurred, they will have eased their future financial position by reducing the burden of annual income-tax. Their real, unencumbered wealth may remain the same. The income they will have surrendered by means of the capital levy will just balance the higher income-tax which they would have had to pay, so that they will not be a penny the worse, unless they cherished the hope that somehow or other they would have succeeded in shifting their burden to some other shoulders, presumably less able to bear it.

15. It seems to me positively wicked to suggest, as Professor Bone does, that a capital levy is equivalent to a repudiation of the war debt "by forcing the same people to repay it to themselves out of their past savings." Those who subscribed the war loans made a sound investment at high interest. Their interest will be paid in full. They have no claim to any additional privilege but must accept the burden of taxation, whether on their capital or their income, as the nation may decide to raise the monies required.

16. I concede to Professor Bone that there are many difficult questions of detail which will have to be settled. A discrimination between personal savings and inherited wealth would certainly be equitable. The assessment of life insurance policies should not exceed the surrender value. The question of minimum also needs consideration. I would prefer an exempted amount of, say, £3,000.—Yours, &c.,

G. S. G.

May 16th, 1918.

SIR,—All your leaders, and most of the letters, on this topic seem futile from their academic aloofness from actuality. No writer seems of the class who will really suffer—i.e., go short of necessities. To levy on a man's margin for superfluities, non-essentials, is no hardship, and if the levy did that only it would be all to the good. But when one sees the thoughtless project of two levies of £425 on a £5,000 capital, one wonders anew at the ignorance of actual life conditions it displays. The point to consider when levying is, what is left after the levy; does it affect the daily purchase of necessities? If it does it is unjust. £5,000 at the gilt-edged return of 5 per cent. yields £5 a week. The levy actually proposed by Mr. Arnold means a loss of 10s. a week—a tenth of the income! Ten shillings in itself is, of course, a mere nothing—when you have plenty beside; but to take a tenth of so small an income as £5 a week is a stupidly monstrous injustice.

On capitals of under £5,000 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. would be ample, as it is impossible, without acute hardship, to find such a sum as £50 out of income, which a 1 per cent. levy would mean.

Again, no discrimination is made between incomes that are being earned by people in full health and activity and those

that are derived from investments from the savings of a lifetime of hard work. That particular injustice is visible in the income tax; such incomes are called unearned, whereas they have been most particularly earned, by thrift and hard work. This is a case of the stupid, unthinking penalizing of thrift, by making its savings pay a greater income tax than when age and health permitted the income to be earned.

They compulsorily retire a man on an inadequate pension, or he is compelled by age or ill-health to retire himself, and then finds he has to pay a larger income tax than when he was fit and able because his income is supposed to be unearned!

Why? Because such things are enacted by people who never knew what poverty, sordid or genteel, means; and have no ability, nor the desire to acquire it, of knowing what it means for an intellectual to bring up a family on a small income.

Incomes of over £5,000 can be justly levied on, or taxed from 20 to 50 per cent., because enough is left them to live on in necessities. No taxation of any kind has, as yet, more than encroached, and that not severely, on the margin for luxuries of the wealthy class; while with all classes below them taxation, more or less severely, actually attacks the daily necessities. Is it not time taxation for the rich was severe enough to make them realize a shrinkage in actual life necessities? The levy proposed on capitals up to £5,000 is a stupid injustice, and cannot be enforced without widespread disaster.—Yours, &c.,

RETIRED.

THE SECRET TREATIES.

SIR,—In a review in your issue of May 11th of "The Secret Treaties," published by the Union of Democratic Control, your contributor makes the following assertion:—

"The bargaining which brought in Roumania in August, 1916, handing over to her the Banát, Transylvania to the Theiss, and Bukovina to the Pruth, and to which this country, as well as Russia, was a party, was equally disregarding of the principle of nationality, for in none of these claims did the Roumanian population constitute a majority. There was no warrant whatever in these arrangements for Mr. Lloyd George's declaration of January 5th, this year, that 'We also press that justice be done to men of Roumanian blood and speech in their legitimate aspirations.'"

I beg to call your reviewer's attention to the following facts:—

(1) Transylvania does not extend "to the Theiss," the main course of which river flows some 125 miles to the west of the western boundary of Transylvania.

(2) Even according to *Hungarian official statistics* (1910 census—notoriously partial to the Magyars as these are known and can be proved to be—the population of Transylvania in 1910 was:—

Roumanians	1,472,021 or 55 per cent.
Magyars and Szeklers ...	918,217 or 34.3 " "
Germans	234,085 or 8.7 " "

i.e., the Roumanians were in an absolute majority of the whole population.

(3) In the Banát, according to the same statistics, there were in 1910:—

Roumanians	592,049 or 37.4 per cent.
Germans	387,545 or 24.5 " "
Serbs	284,329 or 18 " "
Magyars	242,162 or 15.3 " "

(in Krassó-Szöreny, the most eastern county of the Banát, the Roumanian population is 72.1 per cent. of the whole, according to these same Hungarian statistics).

(4) Even beyond the boundaries of Transylvania and the Banát the Roumanians form a majority of the population. These same Hungarian statistics show that in the county of Szilágy (Roum. Salágy) the Roumanians number 136,087 and Magyars only 87,312 out of a total of 230,140; in the county of Arad (including the town of Arad) the Roumanians number 239,755 and the Magyars 124,215 out of a total of 414,388. In Bihar and Szatmár and Máramaros the Roumanians form, though not majorities as elsewhere, at least very strong minorities.

(5) The old Roumanian country of Bukovina wrenched from Moldavia by Austria in 1775 and containing Suceava, the old Moldavian capital, and the famous Putna monastery, possessed down till 1869 a Roumanian majority. Since then Ruthenian immigration from Galicia has altered the proportions of the population. In 1917 there were—out of a population of 794,924—305,105 Ruthenian speakers (including a great number of Ruthenized Roumanians) and 273,254 Roumanian speakers. The Roumanian population of Bukovina, however, lives in territorial contact with the Roumanians of Moldavia.

In any case, your reviewer has made grave mistakes of fact which, in fairness, I would ask him to acknowledge and correct. Possibly he was under the illusion that all Hungary up to the Theiss was to be Roumania's portion—including the almost purely Magyar counties of Békés, Csanád, &c. This is, of course, not the case. His mistake probably arose from a misunderstanding of the phrase "To the Theiss!" which refers to the Theiss frontier of the Banát only.

There is, of course, a real Banát question (easily capable of settlement), but not between Magyars and Roumanians but between Roumanians and Serbs, the latter forming a majority in the western county of Torontál. The rest of the Banát is indisputably Roumanian.

Your reviewer need not cavil at Mr. Lloyd George's words.

To anyone familiar with the history of the Roumanians of Hungary and the régime of political, military, educational, and judicial oppression to which the Magyars have subjected them, the Prime Minister's words were more than fully justified. The Transylvanian question well repays study. One fact may be recorded. On a population basis (even according to Hungarian statistics) there should be sixty-nine Roumanian deputies in the Hungarian House of Representatives (which numbers 413). There are, in fact, five. *Ex uno disce omnia.*—Yours, &c.,

A. W. A. LEEPER.

Hon. Secretary, Anglo-Roumanian Society.

5, Old Burlington Street, W. 1.

[Mr. Leeper's letter confuses the issue. Roumania claimed, as we understand it, not merely Transylvania proper, the Banát, and the Bukovina, but also the whole of Hungary up to the line of the Theiss. In his proclamation on entering the war King Ferdinand announced that he proposed to liberate the country from the Theiss to the Black Sea. Again on May 1st, 1915, M. Poklefsky reported Roumania's demands to M. Sazonoff as follows:—

"Transylvania and the Banát, the southern boundary of the new territory to be the Danube up to the junction of the River Theiss: thence the western boundary to run north past Szegedin and Debreczen to the Carpathians, then east to the line of the River Pruth, including Bukovina."

Again, the actual treaty is summarized as satisfying "all Roumanian claims to the Banát, Transylvania up to the Theiss, and Bukovina up to the Pruth." This is verbally inaccurate, since, as Mr. Leeper points out, Transylvania stops far short of the Theiss. It is as much as if one were to talk of "France up to the Rhine." Clearly Roumania did demand the whole country between her own frontier and the Theiss. This includes some of the purest Magyar country (Hajdu, Szabolcs, part of Czolnok and Csongrad, &c.), with Magyar populations reckoned at 98 and 99 per cent.—ED., THE NATION.]

IRISH WRITERS AND CONSCRIPTION.

SIR,—We, the undersigned writers, feel compelled to appeal and protest against the enforcement of Conscription in our country, believing, as we do, that such action will destroy all hope of peace in Ireland and goodwill towards England in our lifetime.—Yours, &c.,

(Signed) A. GREGORY.

W. B. YEATS.

JAMES STEPHENS.

GEORGE RUSSELL ("Æ").

DOUGLAS HYDE (An Crasibhín).

May 17th, 1918.

THE LITTLE THEATRE.

SIR,—I was greatly interested in Mr. Miles Malleson's plea for the Little Theatre in a recent number of THE NATION. I had something to do with such a theatre at Letchworth, where, so far as it went, it was distinctly successful, and offered prospects of development, which were suspended by the war. We were a small group only, and did practically the whole work ourselves. We gave a large number of performances, mostly of modern plays, and depended for our support upon the whole town rather than upon a small section of people. We had no funds beyond the receipts from the performances, and made no appeal for funds; and tickets were sold only at the Box Office. Our test for plays was that they should be worth doing and be interesting to the performers; and in keeping to that standard we did actually interest the public too. Had our work been permitted to continue, we should by now have had a small theatre of our own, with, perhaps, a little company able to visit the surrounding towns.

I venture to think that the future of the theatre (outside London) will depend upon the Little Theatre; not the amateur's theatre, but a theatre based upon the enthusiastic work of artists, supported by the pride and interest of the community. To that end we should seek to develop local life. Until the war our small towns had lost their vitality, and our large towns had no conscious unity, so that civic life was poor and unproductive. There is evidence that the war has already quickened local consciousness, and when it ends, that quickening should not be allowed to subside. For my own part, I believe, it might find a means of expression in connection with the great building schemes that will have to be undertaken. These schemes will provide an opportunity for the re-building of England. Could we not set up the ideal of the small town, as one to which that re-building should conform? The small town means a town in which people know one another: in which their common interests are understood and responded to. The art of the theatre is, above all things, an art of the community. It can only be practised when people join together with a common object; and common objects can only be maintained when people are in close association. The small town, if it became normal again in England, would provide a basis for the Little Theatre in which the art could be practised with adequate support. And these Little Theatres would have relations with one another; their companies would visit one another; and co-operative theatrical enterprises of that sort would soon provide a good alternative to the cinema. I believe that to be a sound deduction from the experience of Letchworth.—Yours, &c.,

C. B. PURDOM.

Woodside Cottage, Letchworth, Herts.

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. Robb Lawson, asks what objections can be raised to the National Theatre as an after-war theatre for the *Intelligentia*, and calls, granted the objections, for another practical scheme.

The National Theatre—admirable and desirable as it is—will be faced with the alternative of paying its way, by courting popularity as frankly as any variety theatre, or of claiming an annual subsidy, and submitting, like all endowed institutions, to the fetters of orthodoxy. In either case, the scale of expenditure proposed is so great as to make experimental production (the true hope of the advanced theatre) impossible, and the *Intelligentia*, who are chiefly concerned with advanced theatre, will be left, as usual, unprovided for.

May I, therefore, fill in the outline sketched a few weeks ago by "H. W. M." with the following rough details of a scheme for a private, cheap, experimental theatre, backed and controlled by a limited public?

Object.—To produce good plays of limited appeal under conditions comparable to those obtaining in the ordinary theatre—i.e., adequately rehearsed, with reasonable remuneration for authors and players, in permanent premises, and for sufficient consecutive performances to give the play a chance of settling into its stride. These are conditions which the existing societies, with all their enterprise, cannot provide. The remoteness, the "queerness," and—dare one say it!—the raggedness and dullness of many special performances are due solely to the heartbreaking difficulties under which they are presented.

Membership and Subscription.

2,000 annual subscribers of £1 1s. (Upper Circle)	
4,000 " " " £2 2s. (Balcony and Stalls)	
2,000 " " " £3 3s. (Front Stalls)	

Each subscriber to be entitled to one reserved seat for each production, and to admission (on application, and subject to the capacity of the theatre) to all performances, so that on a season of twelve performances maximum prices would work out at 1s. 9d., 3s. 6d., and 5s. 3d. per performance. No money to be taken in the theatre except for refreshments. Seats to be allotted on the *abonnement* system, an attendance of approximately 400 being maintained at each performance.

Premises.—For economy, freedom from the embarrassments of the Censorship, and greater facility in obtaining plays, it is suggested that these should at first be unlicensed, and outside theatre-land, but reasonably central, and near an accessible tube-station. To build would cost many thousands; but a hall or similar building, 70 feet by 40 feet by 35 feet high could be converted with comparative cheapness into a correct and comfortable theatre about the size of the Criterion. Suggested capacity, 500. All seats alike and comfortable (this being a supreme need of the Higher Drama). A foyer and club rooms useful but not indispensable.

Productions.—Twelve annually in two consecutive seasons totalling thirty-six weeks (September to Christmas to May). Each season to open on a Saturday. First nights thereafter every third Saturday, *matinées* every Tuesday or Wednesday, last nights every third Thursday, dress rehearsals every third Friday. Thus each production has a guaranteed run of twenty performances, with a guaranteed attendance of four-fifths capacity at each performance, the remainder of the house being "papered."

Two considerations suggest twenty as the best number. (a) That it is desirable to keep the theatre continuously running, and that with all respect to the Repertory Theatres it takes a minimum of three weeks to rehearse a play with any degree of finish. (b) That it is desirable to give the play only as many performances as may be compatible with a good attendance at each performance, and that on an 8,000 basis a greater number than twenty would mean poor houses.

Company.—A permanent nucleus on thirty-six weeks' contracts, leaving a margin of expenditure for special engagements; by this means *ensemble* is assured and the risk of miscasting (the weakness of the (Repertory Theatre) minimized.

Constitution and Administration.—A Committee, annually elected, to draw up and submit annually to the Society a list of plays from which the plays of the year shall be chosen by vote of all the members, also to appoint annually a Manager, who shall have sole control during his year of office, and may be reappointed at the end of it. The Committee to decide the limits of expenditure at the beginning of the year, but thereafter to have no voice in the control of the theatre, short of calling upon the manager to resign. (Experience has shown that where the theatre is concerned, detail administration by committee is an impossibility.) The Manager to undertake personally six productions only in one year.

New Plays.—The Society to retain a lien on all new plays originally produced by them.

Finance.—Preliminary expenses (lease, building, outfit, &c.) to be met by a loan repayable in yearly instalments, possibly also in some part by donations. Suggested yearly running expenses as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Instalment towards repayment of debt, rent, rates, taxes, repairs and vacation cleaning	4,000	0	0
Salaries (on yearly contracts):			
Manager (produces 6 out of 12 plays) £800,			
Secretary £100, Asst. do. £80, Stage Door-keeper £80	840	0	0
(on 36-weeks' contracts):			
Stage Manager £10 p.w., Asst. do. £4, Carpenter £4, Dayman £2 10s., Props. £3 10s., Electrician (part-time) £3	1,026	0	0
(on weekly wages):			
3 Cleaners at £1 (37 weeks); Bollerman £1, Call-boy 10s., (36 weeks)	165	0	0

(paid by performance):

Front of house: 3 Ushers at 2s. 6d., 2 Cloak-room Attendants at 2s. 6d., 1 Bar Attendant at 5s., 1 do. at 3s., 1 Linkman at 5s. (240 performances); Back of house: 1 Fireman at 5s., 8 Nightmen (on average) at 3s. 6d., 4 Dressers at 3s. 6d. (240 performances), plus 12 dress rehearsals at same rates	890	4	0
Artists' Salaries (average of £120 weekly, e.g., 12 at £10 average or 20 at £5 average)	4,320	0	0
Orchestra (on average a quartette at £15 per week; sometimes augmented, sometimes dispensed with)	576	0	0
Authors' fees (average 7½ per cent. on £16,800; assuming that no expired-copyright plays are given)	1,260	0	0
Producers' fees (for 6 productions not undertaken by Manager; average £50 per production)	180	0	0
Production expenses (average £200 per production)	2,400	0	0
Heating and Lighting	360	0	0
Circulars, programmes, tickets, postage, office and sundry	250	0	0
Balance	524	16	0
	£16,800	0	0

After-war wages are a matter of guess-work at present, but a substantial increase on pre-war rates has been allowed for in most cases. The provision for salaries and production expenses is of course very modest compared with the usual London figure, and would not permit of star engagements or lavish dressing or setting, but it is considerably above the usual Repertory Theatre figure, and quite adequate for the present purpose.

Suggested Methods of Organization.—(i) The existing Societies, who muster something like 2,000 between them, to combine forces, form a joint committee, and present a series of subscription *matinées* as a basis of appeal to the wider public. (ii) Lecture courses in Greater London. (iii) A Press campaign. The practicability of the scheme depends upon the higher public themselves. If they care sufficiently for the theatre to organize themselves, there is no reason why they should not have an endless succession of the kinds of play they want, at half West-end prices. The same sort of thing has of course been done for some years on a much bigger scale in a country we do not mention.

It is to be hoped that the scheme would develop in course of time into a full-blown Repertory theatre, open to the general public; but, as this would involve a further annual expenditure of at least £10,000 on advertising and the rent of licensed premises, it seems advisable to suggest the private and more modest scheme as a beginning.—Yours, &c.,

MANAGER.

Poetry.

WAR CARTOONS.

I.—IN A TRAMCAR.

RAIN, dark, and mud; the gaslights dim and shrunk;
Dull full-fed faces ranged in double row,
Oozing respectability; and, drunk,
Within his corner, mounting in a glow
Of mirth that is not mirth, he sat and sang
Of Afton's green braes. His friend, mean, shoddy-clad,
And hunched and writhen, in a voice that rang
Strange on those stolid masks, explained: "This lad
(I dinna ken him; I'm just seeing him through)
Got blinded at the war. He's no' himsel'."
Then suddenly I saw his eyes were two
Red smears. The conductress signed and rang the bell.
They lumped him out into the triple night
Of dark and mental mirk and blasted sight.

II.—INDOORS.

THE wind runs bleakly from the bitter east,
And how it blows to-night! Against the pane
It snuffles, nosing like a hungry beast.
The little myriad voices of the rain
Are muffled down with sleet. Within, the light,
Shaded, is clear and rubious; the cat
Leers sleepily, well fed; active and bright,
The red fire gushes spirit-flame, whereat
The shadows tremble. All the room's aglow—
Firelight and lamp-light, dear to roofless men!
And he I loved, who perished long ago,
Will never laugh within this room again.
Night and corruption are his lot to-day;
His limbs are crumbling into Flander's clay.

E. ALBERT.

Picture Offer

To "De Reszke" Smokers.

This picture "Miss America Arrives—She Helps the Boys to Get Acquainted" printed in colours on art paper 15 ins. by 10 ins., will be sent free to any smoker forwarding to address below a "De Reszke" box lid and 4d. in stamps, mentioning Picture No. 56.



Miss America Arrives

Episode V. She Helps the Boys to Get Acquainted.

"We don't need any introduction to your countrymen, do we, Miss America? We have known each other for quite a while!"
 "Sure! But only as cousins. Now you're going to be brothers—brothers in arms, and in your choice of cigarettes—Uncle Sam's Best!"

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Virginia Cigarettes are divided into three classes—good, bad, and indifferent—mostly indifferent. The character of a cigarette is readily distinguished. It may be "hot," harsh, irritating; flat, insipid, flavourless; or rich, full-flavoured, yet mild and smooth. No matter which—your palate tells, and tells instantly.

Sir Charles V. Stanford, M.A., Mus.Doc., writes:—

"The 'De Reszke' American Cigarettes seem to me to be excellent."

Nigel Playfair, Esq., writes:—

"Thank you for introducing the 'De Reszke' American Cigarettes, which I find excellent."

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* Numerous other opinions may be seen in other "De Reszke" advertisements.

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The World of Books.

THE "NATION" OFFICE, THURSDAY NIGHT.

THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—

- "Lessons of the World War." By Augustin Hamon. Translated by Bernard Miall. With an introduction by Patrick Geddes. (Fisher Unwin. 16s. net.)
- "The Desert Campaigns." By W. T. Massey. Illustrated by James McBoy. (Constable. 6s. net.)
- "A Stranger in Ireland." By An Englishman. (Talbot Press and Fisher Unwin. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "The Return of the Soldier." A Novel. By Rebecca West. (Nisbet. 5s. net.)

A NEW book with a title, "Tropic Days," is one to make some of us reach out for it with a slight revival of eagerness; and just now when the very spring is black-edged, and you do not look at the morning paper without wondering afterwards whether you will ever have the sense to break yourself of the silly habit, a book by a man who has the strength of mind to loaf away his days by the Great Barrier Reef is picked up with almost as much hope and satisfaction as a complete and final discharge. I had heard before of its beachcombing author, E. J. Banfield (whose publisher is Fisher Unwin), but did not believe what the critics said of him. I thought they had spread it on rather thick; for the luck of some popular critics in never having a bad book sent to them is the only proof in the world of books that literary virtue is ever rewarded—that the high gods of publishing carefully select nothing but benedictions for those who strive nobly with sin. Just look at the review volumes of the —. But no we won't.

THE trouble is, these critics are very nearly right now and then. Their copious superlatives, which could be just not more than a score of times in a century, hide from us the chance we might seize occasionally of a book we should enjoy. Anyhow, there is something in the discovery, hidden by too much praise hitherto, that Mr. Banfield's other books are waiting for me to read. "Tropic Days" is a good book—I mean it was well worth doing, for its author is a naturalist with an original mind, and the leisure to observe what appear matters of no consequence; he has an idle and speculative eye which is taken by a wolf spider and a crab fighting among the dry litter of high-tide mark, the strange deep-sea things left by gales when the coral is exposed again, the solitude of the bush, the ruffians who work schooners in and out of unnamed inlets for pearls and sea-cucumbers, the palæolithic natives and their bull-roarers and spear throwers who catch fish with narcotics, the burning sun, and the Pacific Ocean, that mysterious presence which dominates his life.

"A moonless, cloudless night. The little praam takes the ground in the bay a few yards from the beach and in the midst of a constellation of jelly-fishes spherical in form and varying in size. The larger are so many pale blue orbs floating lazily in a luminous mist, the only visible manifestation of life being a delicate but rhythmical deepening of the central hue. The wash of my wading seems not to affect them.

"I become conscious of the sudden appearance and swift disappearance of lesser spheres of startling brilliance. They emerge from nothingness, pause for a moment, and shoot towards me with extraordinary impulse. Each is a globule, resplendently blue. The tint intensifies as with accelerated velocity the atom flies until of its own excessive energy it explodes with a shell-like flash, leaving a sinuous trail of golden light."

A NATURALIST who writes as well as that by candle-light in a shack by a South Sea beach should be encouraged. We have plenty of room for him. He knows how to tell a story, too—there is his yarn about the native girl, Soosie—and so well that no editor of an English magazine would read anything as good, except for personal entertainment; after which it would be returned with a few polite but printed

words, if the postage was prepaid. This book has hints of coral landings which shadow with pleasant melancholy the thoughts of any reader who himself has seen, but fears that with time and war these mortal eyes will never see again the loom of a tropic island, nor feel the stir of youth when going ashore at a strand which is an aching white, where there is no sound but the timeless surf, and the crunch of one pair of feet (who was there last?) over the bleached shells and carapaces, towards the statues of a clump of palms; beyond the palms there is a lagoon where sea-birds leisurely fan the hot air with ponderous wings, and all day nobody regards you but the great Sun. Well, it is a question whether any of us deserves more than one day like that in his life; and writers who can recall such occasions, like Mr. Banfield, are few and most welcome.

R. L. S., though he confessed he enjoyed the prospect afar of the South Seas, as a chance for a travel book, did not make a literary success of his voyaging; perhaps because his was deliberately a literary voyage. Perhaps it is no good saying that a certain subject will make a book; a book is an accident, and if it is a happy one, the subject is made. Stevenson wrote of the islands as though tired and disenchanted. He was not in a dream there. He came out of his dream there. He had been reading Herman Melville; and lepers, missionaries, syphilis, gin, and traders, woke him up. The honey-colored hussey with hibiscus blossoms in her odorous hair, whom Melville saw dancing the hula-hula by moonlight, had married the policeman. If R. L. S. had never read "Typee" and "Omoo," he himself might have done better; but if he had not read those delectable volumes he might not have gone to Polynesia. He gave us more enjoyable pictures of ships and the sea, and of adventurous oceanic landfalls, in "The Wrecker" and "The Ebb Tide." He could not hope to recapture the morning colors of those naughty but innocent tropic groves which shine still in Melville's works. And I still think the liveliest sketches we have in one book of the splendor of wind and sun upon the run of the seas and the exploding combers, the palms beside the translucency and mystery of pools in the intricate coral, are to be found in "The Blue Lagoon." Throughout Conrad's short stories and novels there are, as most of us know now, magical disclosures of the islands of the sun, which, beyond doubt, are the best of their kind in English, or perhaps any language.

BUT "the tropics" is a wide term. It includes much more than obvious coral strands—for it is natural that writers should have made most of the seaboard of the tropics. The desert, the jungle, and the savannah are less accessible, and give nothing to a chance visitor but the awe which comes of solitude in the monotony of mere vastness. But see what Doughty has made of torrid rock, parched watercourses, and sand! Something in the silent, arid, and burning wilderness meant to him what May time means to most of us, and I think I got a hint of it—no more—when once among the barchans of North Africa, at sunset, when the earth seemed waiting for the word which would release it from its long silence and endurance, I found myself near a camp of nomads, saw their fires lost in the tide of gloom that was rising, and smelt the acrid smoke of herbs. Or read Cunninghamham's Graham's desert sketches; and Hudson's "El Ombú," which an excellent critic told me but yesterday he thought was the best short story we have, though I don't quite agree with him.

I KEEP that place for the "Heart of Darkness," in which we get, as though by chance, by suggestions that obliquely occur, the tropical forest for what it is. That bright picture made of orchids, abundant and varied foliage, and chromatic birds and butterflies, long accepted by us as the real thing because many good writers have so pictured it (and they were never there), is strangely false. The tropical forest is night and decay. Its interior and soundless gloom first surprises the traveller, chills him with a warning fear, and if he stays long enough, sinks into his mind and darkens it.

H. M. T.

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NOTE.—It is a mad world, so occasionally the Advertisements of Pope & Bradley are fashionable.

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By H. DENNIS BRADLEY.



"Curfew"

Ridette's picture is apropos of nothingness—to be found in the Entente meaning of "curfew feu."
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Rising, he flung open his window and gazed over the Metropolis of the world.

Darkness, beloved by the old because their ugliness becomes unseen, was setting in over the great city, and even as he gazed the solemn peal of Curfew broke upon his ear.

He chuckled as he drew forth sheets of paper. "Not a flaw in the argument," he soliloquised, "not one flaw, for figures cannot lie. In half an hour the Official Tuckers Up will have completed their rounds; not a fire will burn in all London, not a light will glow, not a train will run, not a crumb will fall from the richest man's table; the saving in shoe leather alone will suffice to run the war for hours; clothes will wear longer, tobacco and alcohol will be saved in incalculable quantities, and the birds will get their sleep undisturbed. This is indeed a Perfect Economy. Every link holds."

A sardonic titter startled him, and turning in his chair he beheld his Evil Genius, the Spirit of Doubt.

"I rather fancied," sneered the malevolent Spirit, "that there was a wool shortage."

"Wool?" queried the Controller fiercely.

"Have you thought of the vastly increased wear-and-tear of blankets?"

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Considering the wool shortage and the dignified prices of matches and gin, there is no reason why Pope & Bradley's charges should not be equally autocratic. But the House does not practise commercial immorality—which is uninteresting—so at 14, Old Bond Street they remain: Lounge Suits from £6 6s. od., Dinner Suits £8 8s. od., Service Jackets £5 15s. 6d., Slacks £2 12s. 6d.

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BALANCE SHEET.

	Y	
Capital (paid up)	36,000,000.00	LIABILITIES.
Reserve Fund	22,100,000.00	
Reserve for Doubtful Debts	2,828,504.21	
Notes in Circulation	20,023,208.95	
Deposits (Current, Fixed, &c.)	527,004,429.91	
Bills Payable, Bills Re-discounted, Acceptances, and other Sums due by the Bank	368,909,057.45	
Dividends Unclaimed	10,304.77	
Balance of Profit and Loss brought forward from last Account	2,226,757.81	
Net Profit for the past Half-year	3,653,690.92	
	Yen 982,755,954.02	

ASSETS.

	Y	Y
Cash Account—		
In Hand	39,915,479.39	
At Bankers	133,320,613.13	173,236,092.52
Investments in Public Securities		25,780,511.68
Bills discounted, Loans, Advances, &c.		225,531,618.83
Bills receivable and other Sums due to the Bank		551,767,497.66
Bullion and Foreign Money		3,476,836.33
Bank's Premises, Properties, Furniture, &c.		2,963,397.00
	Yen 982,755,954.02	

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT.

	Y
To Interests, Taxes, Current Expenses, Rebate on Bills Current, Bad and Doubtful Debts, Bonus for Officers and Clerks, &c.	47 084,294.89
To Reserve Fund	1,000,000.00
To Dividend—	
Yen 6.00 per Old Share for 240,000 Shares }	2,160,000.00
Yen 3.00 per New Share " " }	
To Balance carried forward to next Account	2,720,448.73
	Yen 51,964,743.62
By Balance brought forward 30th June, 1917	2,226,757.81
By Amount of Gross Profits for the Half-year ending 31st December, 1917	49,737,985.81
	Yen 51,964,743.62

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Reviews.

THE RUSSIA OF WITTE.

"The Eclipse of Russia." By E. J. DILLON. (Dent & Sons. 16s. net.)

THERE are three ways of learning to know a foreign country. The simplest is to study it from the outside as a phenomenon, the method of the journalist and the traveller. Another way is that of the merchant or diplomatist, who wishes to produce an effect in the foreign country for his own ends or his country's, and studies it in order to learn how to act upon it. The third method is that of the settler, who becomes morally, if not legally, naturalized, and adapts himself to his environment as he assimilates it. All these methods have their peculiar advantages and drawbacks. Given sympathy, opportunity, time, and some understanding of politics and economics the first is perhaps the best, for the man who practises it may all the while preserve a purely intellectual attitude. He is studying and observing, and his own interests need never bias him. The second method is much the worst, for the merchant, financier, or diplomatist will usually judge a tendency according to its influence on his own fortunes. The third method tends to take the man who practises it successfully out of the class of foreign observers altogether. He comes to us with his British name and his native speech, but his opinions are those of the party with which he acted abroad.

Dr. Dillon is much the most distinguished and experienced exponent of this last method. He went to Russia as a young man, and after graduating in a Russian University, became successively a professor in Kieff and a responsible journalist and editor in Petrograd. Throughout the latter years of a long career he was the friend, adviser, and journalistic agent of Count Witte. He knew everyone in Petrograd, and played the curiously complicated part of a journalist who sought at the same time to influence British and Russian opinion. His knowledge of Russian life is probably unequalled among men of British birth, but his standpoint is not that of the foreign observer who retains a certain detachment, however intimate his associations may be. It is that of a man who played a part in Russian politics, and attached himself as an active worker to a particular tendency and group in Russian affairs. His book is in many ways the most instructed, as it is certainly the most individual contribution in recent years in our language to the study of Russian affairs. None the less we would class it not with English, but with Russian books.

Precisely as Professor Miliukoff, a Russian politician of cosmopolitan experience, wrote for English and American readers from the "Cadet" standpoint, so Dr. Dillon writes from the standpoint of the more modern-minded bureaucrat. For him, Witte was Russia's "unique statesman," and it is the recollections and the opinions of this powerful and rather equivocal figure which furnish his material and his outlook. The book is Witte's voice speaking from the grave, and its chief claim to attention is that it discloses some of Witte's experiences in his dealings with the Kaiser and the Tsar. That Witte was a forceful and constructive personality no one doubts, but no big man was more isolated in Russia. One may say with truth, as Dr. Dillon very forcibly says, that all Russian parties have failed and even that none of them knew Russia. That perhaps is because there is no Russia to know. There is only a plastic variable mass. Judged by the pragmatic test of success in leading and controlling this strange nation, it is just possible that the Bolsheviks may prove to be the exception to that rule. But certainly Witte was not an exception. He wholly failed to make a party. He wholly failed to win confidence. He fell between Liberals and Conservatives, and not one group among them would trust him. Judged by this practical test, he, least of any of her physicians, "knew Russia." The opinion then, which Dr. Dillon reflects, is a Russian opinion, but it is that of an isolated Russian bureaucrat. "Cadets," Social Revolutionists, Bolsheviks, and "Black Hundreds," may all have been disastrously wrong, but theirs at least was not lonely error. Wrong-headed, it was still a manifestation of the Russian national mind.

Witte's opinions on the internal politics of Russia may

be summed up in the view that from 1905 onwards the dynasty might have been saved by adopting a more or less close copy of the German Constitution. He would have created a Reichstag-Duma, but he would not have conceded responsible parliamentary government. Dr. Dillon cites this opinion, adopts it, and recurs to it, without perceiving that it was just this recipe which was actually tried. The Duma which met in 1906 was a Reichstag, resting like the German model on universal suffrage, with a bureaucratic Ministry set over it. The Duma which sat from 1907 had a Prussian, rather than a German, basis in its class franchise. The experiment worked remarkably ill, and the chief reason was, perhaps, that the essential instrument of the German system was absent. Germany has a bureaucracy which is, with all its faults, honest, efficient, and instructed. It is composed of well-educated and carefully-trained men, who have a tradition of public duty and elaborate understanding of the structure of modern society. Its good work on social insurance, education, and housing will be its solid and lasting monument, even when the democratic era comes. To imagine that this conservative structure could be copied in Russia without its one sound conservative factor gives us a poor idea of the sagacity of Russia's "unique statesman," and in Dr. Dillon, who knows Germany as well as Russia, it is a stranger vagary still. It was reasonable to argue that you could build on anything in Russia rather than its bureaucracy. Uneducated, steeped in financial corruption, without the glimmering of an idea of social welfare, the bureaucracy was precisely the most hopeless element of the chaos. It is quite possible that some intermediate stage between national democracy and autocracy was desirable. The Zemstvos were a hopeful foundation on which to build, but the German model was the last to copy. Nor do the whole complex of Witte's policies impress us more favorably. He was a man of peace, yet he forced the economic "penetration" of China, and failed to see that this ambition (a wanton venture for a Power which had no capital to export, and required rather to cultivate its own garden intensively) must lead to a clash with rival Empires. His economic policy of high protection and the artificial stimulation of Russian industries led to two inevitable consequences contrary to his own tendency. It made an urban proletariat, which was bound to become the instrument of revolution. It also made a small, new capitalist society, wholly dependent on politics, and disposed in pursuit of its supposed economic interest to push an aggressive nationalism in foreign policy. Dr. Dillon rightly recognizes the dissatisfaction with the Russo-German Commercial Treaty as one of the prime causes of the war on the Russian side. Thus Witte, who preached peace, by a disastrous fatality prepared the conditions for two Russian wars.

It is as a negative and very destructive critic that Dr. Dillon is most readable and convincing. He preaches from the comprehensive text that Russia is, or was, by her whole nature a predatory state, at home as well as abroad. He describes this amorphous society with its riot of contradictions, ably and forcibly. He pulls us up from time to time to remind us that such phenomena as human sacrifice (a woman, he tells us, was literally "sacrificed" to Father John of Kronstadt) still survive. He tells us how several "bullies," taken straight from brothels, were appointed censors of morals over teachers and students in his own University of Kieff. There is nothing new in his version of the oft-told tales of Gapon, Azeff, and Rasputin, but he tells these stories well, and so handles them that these monstrous, incredible fables, which tax Western credulity more severely than any Oriental miracle, assume their place as revelations of a society (shall we call it a civilization?) which itself was incredible and almost fabulous. Dr. Dillon leaves the Rasputin legend intact as a symptom of religious and sexual neurosis, but he warns us not to believe that Rasputin enjoyed or sought to exercise any real political influence. He was like the peasant who wished he were Tsar in order that he might buy a hundred roubles' worth of bacon and eat it from morning to night. Rasputin's foible, however, was not bacon. We accept Dr. Dillon's evidence as to the period up to 1914, when he left Russia, but it is just possible that during the war Rasputin's ambitions may have grown a little wider. Whoever wishes to read an exposure of the seamy side of Russian society, will be satisfied with this book. Dr. Dillon hits the giant who

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Illustrated, 5s. net.

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is down with peculiar gusto. The book will be popular. But there is another Russia, of heroism and abnegation, as sensitive, as creative, as it may be unpractical and unsuccessful. It is not in the mental equipment of this authority to sympathize either with the dreams of the revolution, and the self-sacrifice of the revolutionists, or even with the Russia of literature. His hero was Witte.

On the side of foreign policy Dr. Dillon tells again the oft-told tale that Russia was an autocracy, and that the last of the autocrats was a compound of irresolution and obstinacy, variable and yet self-confident. The "Willy-Nicky" correspondence showed him to be the mere tool of the much abler Kaiser, and yet, puppet as he was in the hands of the Hohenzollern, he could ignore and defy his own ministers. Dr. Dillon tells in some detail the story of the Tsar's assent to the Kaiser's request that he should agree to the German acquisition of Kiao-Chau. New and important is Dr. Dillon's evidently authentic revelation that in the same light way the Tsar, without the knowledge of his ministers, had assented to the despatch of the Liman von Sanders mission to Constantinople. A few months later he was apparently prepared (in February, 1914) to precipitate war for the assertion of Russia's claims to the Straits. The central chapter of Dr. Dillon's revelations (and very full, instructive, and documented it is) turns on the Treaty of Björkø. The bare facts about this singular episode were already known from the "Willy-Nicky" telegrams. The Kaiser sedulously played the "friend in need" to the Tsar during the Japanese War, widened the breach with England, plotted the violation of Danish neutrality, and finally induced the Tsar to sign a secret treaty of Russo-German alliance. The last clause stipulated that France, which was never informed, should be morally forced by Russia to join the alliance. All this was done by the Tsar without the knowledge of any of his ministers. When Witte and Lamsdorff were informed, they regarded it, very naturally, as an act of treachery to France, and in the end managed to get the treaty cancelled. So much was public knowledge, though Dr. Dillon adds further intimate detail. What is wholly new to us is his elucidation, from Witte's dictated recollections, of the Kaiser's motives. To Witte the Kaiser represented that he was anxious to create a kind of European Federation, to put an end to the rivalry of the Continental Powers, and even to arrest the competition in armaments. France was to be brought in, and the Franco-German feud ended for ever. It was in short something like the grand project of Sully and Henry of Navarre. The curious thing is that in the first conversation with Witte, America (as formerly the Yellow Race) was the enemy. In 1904-6 England has become the enemy. We do not dispute for one moment the authenticity of these revelations, but we are not sure that the Kaiser disclosed his whole mind to Witte. He knew Witte's foible as an economist, and appealed to him at a sensitive point, well knowing that he grudged Russia's expenditure on armaments. We gravely question, however, whether the Kaiser did really aim, even by these equivocal means, at disarmament and European federation. His romantic temperament has undoubtedly its idealist side, but it served him chiefly to make it the easier for him to play with unwary dupes.

The other new fact for us in this book is the revelation that in 1896, the Tsar had a scheme fully ready for the seizure of the Bosphorus—of course, without the participation of his Ministers. That scheme, says Dr. Dillon, was never wholly abandoned, and, in fact, as we now know, it was on the point of being carried out in February, 1914. All that Dr. Dillon tells us of the conduct of Russian foreign policy, wayward, secretive, and predatory, confirms the view that we have always taken in these columns. That view led us to oppose the Anglo-Russian *entente*, which Dr. Dillon did his utmost to promote. With more knowledge of Russian policy than most Englishmen, we cannot think that his guidance is very sure.

ARMS AND THE SPRING POET.

"The Judgment of Valhalla." By GILBERT FRANKAU.
(Chatto & Windus. 3s. 6d. net.)

"Some Poems of Roger Casement." (The Talbot Press Booklets. 1s. net.)

"Towards the Dawn, and Other Poems." By GILBERT THOMAS. (Headley Bros. 1s. 3d. net.)

"Poems." By MAY WHEELER. (Heffer. 1s. net.)

"Messines, and Other Poems." By EMILE CAMMAERTS.
Translated by TITA BRAND-CAMMAERTS. (Lane. 3s. 6d. net.)

WITHOUT committing oneself to gentility, without making a fashion-plate of the Muse, one may still find Mr. Frankau's manner a trifle bristling. The following:—

"There's meat to spare at the Killer-Feasts where Thor's swung hammer twirls;
There's beer and enough, in the Full Canteen where the Endless Smoke upcurls;
There are lips and lips for the Killer-Men in the Hall of the Dancing Girls.
There's a place for any that passes clean—but for you there's never a place;
The Endless Smoke would blacken your lips, and the Girls would spit in your face,
And the Beer and the Meat go sour in your guts—for you died the death of disgrace"

—not only makes us believe (some would say erroneously) that it was Mr. Kipling who invented poetry, but that there were points about the Christian Heaven, even if, as Anatole France assures us, it is no more than a military hierarchy. Still, Mr. Frankau is something more than a minstrel—on the beach, rather than in the ancestral hall. He is versatile and has a bright, steely kind of mind, which throws up objects in sudden relief. Nor is he by any means a victim to his own "cleverness." For instance:—

"Lord, if I'd half your brains, I'd write a book:
None of your sentimental platitudes,
But something real, vital; that should strip
The glamor from this outrage we call war,
Showing it naked, hideous, stupid, vile—
One vast abomination. So that they
Who, coming after, till the ransomed fields
Where our lean corpses rotted in the ooze,
Reading my written words should understand
The dark, stupendous horror, visualize
The unutterable foulness of it all. . . ."

And then at the end (the poem is an acknowledgment of a presentation copy of war verse):—

"And if posterity should ask of me
What high, what base emotions helped weak flesh
To face such torments, I would answer: 'You!'
Not for themselves, O daughters, grandsons, sons,
Your tortured forebears wrought this miracle;
Not for themselves, *accomplished utterly*
This loathliest task of murderous servitude;
But just because they realized that thus,
And only thus, by sacrifice, might they
Leave a world worth living in—for you—
Good-night, my soldier-poet. *Dormez bien!*"

There is a nice satisfaction, a sense of work well done and well worth doing, about that "*Dormez bien*," which makes mere Kiplinges the very small beer it is.

Possibly, had Roger Casement been alive and a consequential, coat-tail sort of man, he might have called these poems "*Jottings and Disjecta Membra*," or something like that. They do read rather as if they had been jotted down on the back of an envelope while dressing for dinner. Essentially, they are the work of an amateur; and the amateur pays a call upon the Muse, with something in his waistcoat pocket that he feels sure the Muse will be delighted to accept. It is the qualities of the man himself rather than the expression of their poetic truth that one must look for (and can, after all, find) through the impediment of these rhymes. The poem "*Hamilcar Barca*":—

"Thou who didst mark from Heirce's spacious hill
The Roman spears, like mist, uprise each morn,
Yet held, with Hesper's shining point of scorn,
Thy sword unsheathed above Panormus still;
Thou that were leagued with nought but thine own will,
Eurythmic vastness to that stronghold torn
From foes above, below, where though forlorn,
Thou still hadst claws to cling and beak to kill—
Eagle of Eryx . . ."

—has a dignity which it does not altogether owe to the resonant march of the decasyllabic.

How often does one come across books of verse nowadays in which the poet's passion of sincerity, that "rage of knowing, seeing, feeling, the absolute sole truth of things" which was for Browning the poet's vocation—fumbles in vain after an appropriate embodiment, and either wastes itself in some passing novelty of fashion or stupefies itself in an incense of rhetoric! Such books must not be misjudged,

The Call of the Wounded

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They are presages of a time when the encumbrances between conception and letting it out into conscious speech will be cleared away. The pangs will be forgotten in the joy of delivery. Mr. Thomas is one of those poets. For "The Sword of Disillusion" is a really fine and original idea set to a heavy and cumbrous elegiac measure. Its theme is really Francis Thompson's: "When thy seeing blindeth thee to what thy fellow mortals see," and relates how a blinded soldier saw from his inward sight the monstrous futility of war. It has a poignant close:—

"And now that all my hopes are dead before me,
Lord God in Heaven, I cry aloud to thee:
Oh, let me die—or else to sight restore me,
That, having eyes again, I may not see!"

Miss Wheeler's devotional poems belong to the "quietist" school. Nor is their quality—a quality which fastidiously avoids the pretentious, the garrulous, and the over-stressed—merely negative. There is a spirit in delicacy which rejects the colorless no less than the meaninglessly decorative. Perhaps the best thing is a little epigram with a seventeenth-century flavor, "Friendship":—

"Two souls, two minds, two spirits meet
To make an intercourse complete.
Then the flesh hath nought to do
But cleave one person into two."

It has just the right poise between true feeling and a kind of spruce ingenuity. Miss Wheeler does really go for the hardest thing of all, simplicity:—

"With blessed thoughts that have no words,
And blessed things that have no names,"

—language, she feels, should fine itself down to an arrow, to be shot among them. In a future book, therefore, she will avoid the ruck of mystical poetic symbols, a few of which a certain lack of experience tempts her now and again to employ.

M. Cammaerts is disappointing in this volume. The danger of his method was that he would narrow himself down to the purely picturesque, and in an attempt to see reality in little things would lose insight in the occasion of it. That has to some extent befallen him. In "La Paix," for instance, there is surely something rather grotesquely pictorial in:—

Il s'ont nos soldats chantant sous les obus,
Il s'ont nos marins dansant sur la mer.
Il s'ont, en plein ciel, nos chevaucheurs de l'air,
Il s'ont, sans le savoir, dans leur cœur ingénu,
Il s'ont, surtout, splendide et solennelle,
Ceux qui sont morts pour le bon combat,
Et, dont la Terre, de ses grands bras,
Berce le rêve fraternel."

It is not very far from "ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant." At any rate, possibly the soldiers, sailors, and airmen would, if questioned, prefer a more solid kind of peace. That is, indeed, the reproach of the picturesque. It cannot stand up to "real life." It is the business of poetry to turn "real life" into reality, not to leave it out.

TEMPERAMENT.

"Conrad in Quest of his Youth." By LEONARD MERRICK.
With an Introduction by J. M. BARRIE. (Hodder & Stoughton. 6s. net.)

"A DISQUIETING sentimental journey," says Sir James Barrie, "would be down the Obituary column of the 'Times' in search of novel-readers who have gone and died without ever knowing of the sentimental quest of Conrad. They would be the great majority, it seems, and we may drop a sigh for them or a 'Serve you right,' according to their opportunities. Incomplete lives."

Well, here is an oldish reviewer seeking completion of life by reading for the first time a novel of Mr. Merrick's. Sir James continues to exhort him. The novelists themselves, it seems, are agreed that Mr. Merrick is "one of the flowers of their calling." The most successful among them are credited with an uneasy feeling that if Mr. Merrick is not popular, there must be something wrong with the popularity of their own works. "For long he has been the novelists' novelist, and we give you again the chance to share him with us; you have been slow to take the previous chances, and you may turn away again, but in any case he will still remain our man."

There is protest in this, and surely also a note of pathos.

But the publisher is in it with the novelists, resolute at any rate on getting Mr. Merrick well away at the start, and properly handicapped into the bargain; for this is the first volume of a whole new edition of his works, with his laudatory brethren tumbling over one another to write prefaces—Mr. Wells, Sir Arthur Pinero, Mr. Neil Munro, Sir Wm. R. Nicoll, Mr. W. D. Howells, and others. A loyal and a sporting venture.

We like Conrad. Liking him, we are puzzled at finding him, as Mr. Merrick insists on our doing, in quest of his youth. An episode or so excepted, he is throughout these adventures youth, and romantic youth, incarnate. At thirty-six he comes into a fortune, decides that he is old, and makes a dash for the Past. He goes to Paris, and suffers all the disillusion. If it were the Paris of the epoch at which the Third Republic was trying for a moment to improve on the Second Empire, with its Café of Heaven, Café of Hell, and the other riots of Montmartre, he may well have had a shock or two; but we should have liked him to exchange a word with the waiter in Heaven, shivering in his wings and tights, who used to whisper as you fumbled for his tip: "Ah-h! It is dam cold in theee laigs."

A visit to Paris was fitting, and we incline to think that Mr. Merrick has sterilised it in the sentimental interests of the Conrad of his fancy; but the trip to Sweetbay in the winter is a douche of the coldest, and we cannot quite see Conrad—the youngest man of thirty-six in Europe—in that preposterous adventure. He invites to Sweetbay for a week the cousins with whom he had shared a holiday there in the days of spades and buckets on the sands. They accept the invitation, are shocked in equal measure with Sweetbay and Conrad, and return sneezing and indignant to London. Conrad is not satisfied. There was a Mary Page of the spade-and-bucket days, and through the postmistress and the vicar he traces her to Tooting. "She advanced towards him with a wide smile, a large and masculine woman wearing a vivid silk blouse, and an air of having dressed herself in a hurry." At the close of an interview fit for Tooting and for nowhere else, Conrad was consoled with the notion that "Mary Page"—Mrs. Barchester-Bailey—believed that he had once again fallen in love with her.

All this is good, light, acceptable comedy; but it is of the kind with which many well-trained novelists, destitute of prefaces but in regular demand at the libraries, have made us quite familiar. Such a writer as Hardy, for instance, is at the other end of the novelist's world.

The episode of Mrs. Adaile (the whole book, it should perhaps be said, is purely episodic) is in the vein of very modern romance, but surely not the kind of interlude devised by a bachelor whose youth has feloniously deserted him. Twenty years earlier Conrad, then really a lad, had met the girlish Mrs. Adaile at a hotel in Rouen. She was lovely and tender and sympathetic, and on the eve of Conrad's leaving she took farewell with a kiss in a situation that made it eloquent of her trust in him. In the stalls of a London theatre, a lady next to Conrad drops a handkerchief scented with chypre, and at once he is transported in fancy to Rouen and Mrs. Adaile. He discovers her address—or her husband's—in the London Directory, and haunts the street until one day the shutters are closed, whereat he gathers courage to ring the bell. In a few hours he is sitting, washed, and in raiment, in the *salle à manger* of a hotel in Ostend, opposite to the door (the waiter had been feed in advance) by which Mrs. Adaile must enter. In quest of his youth? Is it not, to adapt Miss Squeers, "screaming out loud all the time" in him? If, as Sir James Barrie insinuates, there are sundry readers still to go in quest of Mr. Merrick, it will not do to spoil their happiness by so much as a hint at the sunny accidents of Ostend. But, while not revealing it, we may bestow a moment's displeasure on the closing scene. We stick incredulous at the statement that Conrad went to sleep over the French play which he took up to bed with him that night. The play is nothing: what is of concern is the visit that was to come. If Mr. Merrick is to be believed (our faith in him at this juncture is very weak) Mrs. Adaile decides on the evidence of her senses that there is "no way back to Rouen."

On this or that occurrence in the book many readers will perchance be of many minds, but there is no reader who will miss the rather poignant charm of the adventure of the company of strolling players amid whom Conrad, with so

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BOOKS IN BRIEF.

"From Bapaume to Passchendaele: 1917." By PHILIP GIBBS. (Heinemann. 6s.)

ONE touch of rhetoric makes the whole world kin. This is perhaps the secret of the politicians' success, and the large circulation of the publishers' "best sellers." The public dearly loves a phrase with no bothersome subtlety about it. Lamb, in a playful mood, said he could not think and read; books thought for him. Perhaps this was a sly diagnosis of the general mental immaturity which unwarily accepts any highly colored periphrasis. It may be, as some sociologists argue, that man is by nature predestined to be ruled; therefore he bows his head to the oligarchy of words, and loyally refuses to distinguish a flourish of ink from a statement of fact. It would be unjust to suggest that Mr. Gibbs gives no more than a flourish of ink, for he has undeniable facility of language—perhaps, too great a facility—and sympathy and passion. But something more than these qualities is needed in making the histories of this war. We have the facts of the great popularity of Mr. Gibbs and the inadequacy as history of the war correspondents' despatches collected into books. Only critical interpretation is of any value to the present and will be of any value to the future. It is conceivably impossible to state the whole of the truth in daily despatches; the circumstances in which the correspondent is forced to work prohibit the publication of exact information during the progress of the struggle. But no useful purpose is served in collecting the despatches into a book when the events they are intended to describe are a year old, unless all the facts are there. Who, having read no other account of the Somme battles but those written by the correspondents, has any adequate knowledge of what took place between Gommecourt and La Boisselle in July, 1916?

The year 1917 was more crowded than any other period on the Western Front. The public has recovered from the emotions of that year and now needs a sober record of what happened. It would be unreasonable to expect Mr. Gibbs or any other witness of a great battle not to experience, as he puts it, a "sensation of breathlessness and heartbeat"; but that is not the best physical and mental condition in which to write a book. He may give us "the roar and welter and fury of the year," but the result is a tangle. The reader cannot see the war for the armies. Picturesque incidents and heroic behavior are endearing episodes of warfare, but they are not the whole of it. Mr. Gibbs describes himself as one of the witnesses giving evidence before the bar of history, but points out that there is no criticism in his book, no judgment of actions or men, no detailed summing-up of success and failure, these things not being within his liberty or duty as a correspondent. We think that a summary of success and failure, at least, is to be expected from a historian, but if this, and the criticism, and the judgment all be ruled out, there is nothing left for a narrator but to describe the scenes and convey the atmosphere and emotions of the struggle so that they are actual and alive to the audience. Only a great artist could master such a task; and the great artist has not yet come forward.

The Week in the City.

STOCK MARKETS were firm before the Whitsuntide holidays, and optimism appears to have increased during the lovely

weather. Conditions in Ireland may give cause for caution, but the arrests are, of course, warmly welcomed by the average Stock Exchange man, who thinks that Ireland only needs resolute government. The German delay has also strengthened confidence as to our Western Front. Then, again, those who are looking for signs of peace negotiations have been somewhat encouraged by recent Ministerial speeches, as well as by the Hertling interview. The foreign exchanges have improved a little during the week, especially the Swiss and Dutch quotations. But Italian lire are still over 43 to the English pound. The weekly creation of forty millions of debt accounts, of course, for continued inflation at home, and it is to be regretted that the sale of War Bonds is on so reduced a scale. The diminution is variously explained, but the most generally accepted is the consternation spread throughout business circles by the new Conscription Act. An interesting indication of the vast dimensions of the war debt is the statement that on June 1st fifty million pounds will be paid in dividends to 1,500,000 persons who have invested in the 5 per cent. War Loan of January, 1917.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer has asked me," writes Sir Brien Cokayne, Governor of the Bank, in a letter which will be enclosed with each individual warrant, "to suggest that the best possible use to which you can put the dividend is to invest it in National War Bonds. I am sure you will agree that it is the patriotic duty of every Briton to-day to support the country in the crisis we are now facing."

WHITE STAR REPORT.

The report of the Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. for 1917 shows a heavy drop in profits, but whether revenue was higher or lower than in the previous year it is impossible to say, for excess profits tax is deducted before arriving at the profit figure, and there is no means of ascertaining what amount had to be paid. Profit for the year amounted to £1,191,800, as against £2,123,000, and interest on investments brought in £342,400, as against £279,700, the total available amounting to £1,534,300, as compared with £2,402,800. Income tax required £301,300, as against £150,800, and depreciation on fleet and buildings £318,900, as against £440,800. Reserve allocations were reduced from £810,000 to £210,000, and after paying a 20 per cent. dividend, the same as for the previous year, the balance carried forward was £146,400 lower at £154,300. The balance sheet shows some important changes. Creditors, which probably include provision for excess profits duty, are £1,958,800 higher at £3,493,000. While debtors have risen by £718,800 to £3,618,700; general investments at £3,352,700 show an increase of £1,524,200, which follows a rise of £427,600 a year ago. During the year one ship was sunk by the enemy, but two were delivered from the builders.

LINGGI AND ANGLO-MALAY.

The recent announcement of a reduction from 140 to 116½ per cent. in the dividend of Linggi Plantations Ltd. caused little surprise, and the report now to hand shows a reduction of about £20,000 in profits for the year 1917, which amounted to £143,100, or about 125 per cent. on the capital. "All in" costs per lb. were 1s. 2'32d., as against 1s. 0'50d., while the price realized was 2s. 3'73d., as compared with 2s. 6'68d., so that the profit per lb. was 4'77d. lower at 1s. 1'41d. The output for 1918 was originally estimated at 3,000,000 lb.; under the restriction scheme it is not expected to exceed 2,026,857 lb. Anglo-Malay profits were about £16,000 lower at £124,000, "all-in" costs being 1s. 0'85d., as against 11'23d. The dividend was reduced from 85 to 65 per cent. The crop is to be restricted to 1,410,000, as compared with 1,720,000 harvested in 1917.

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